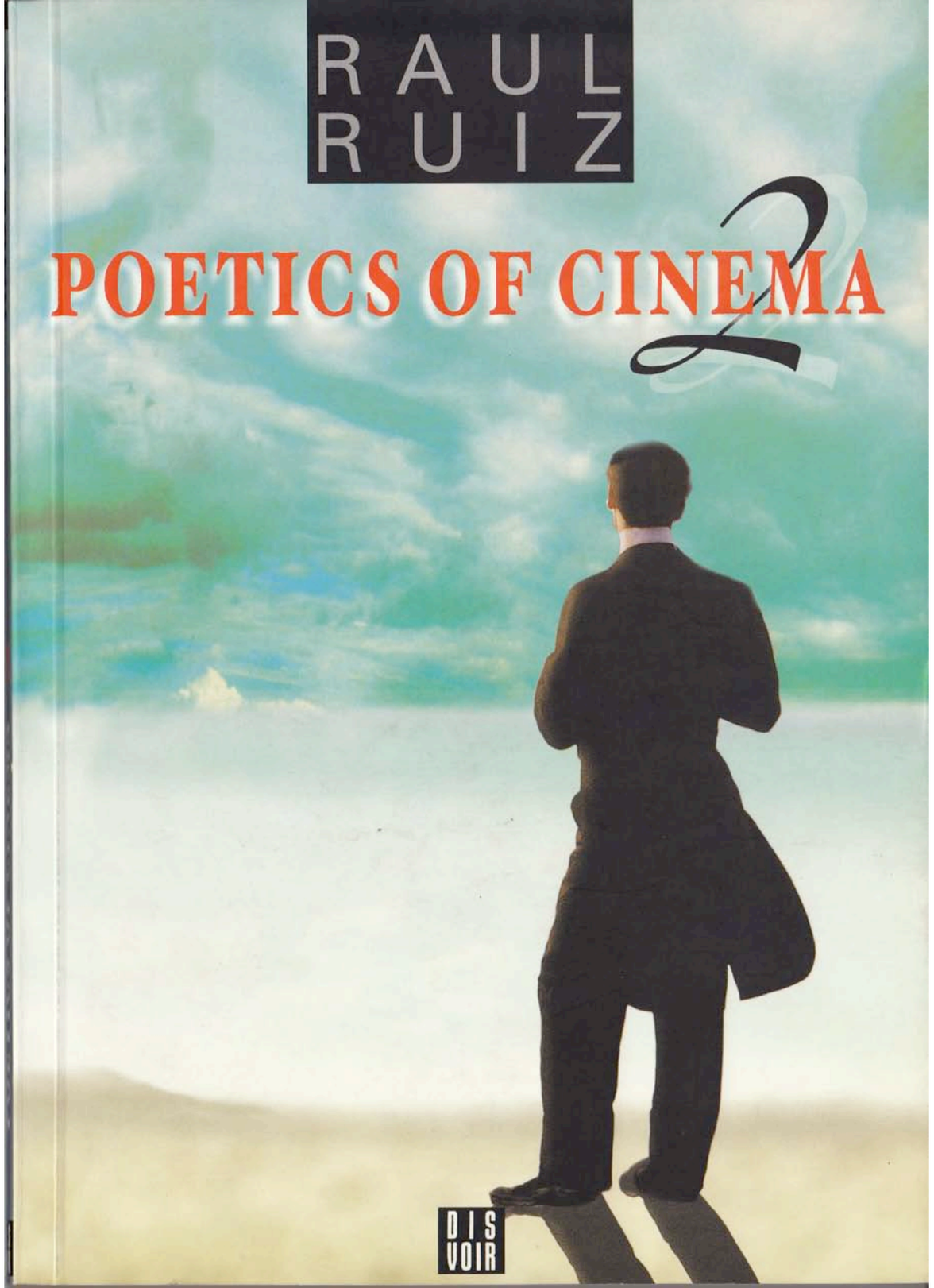
VISIT…

RAUL RUIZ

POETICS OF CINEMA 2



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POETICS OF CINEMA, *2*

SERIES EDITED BY DANIÈLE RIVIÈRE
in the same series "cinema-fiction"

RAUL RUIZ
Poetics of Cinema, 1
The Book of Disappearance

PETER GREENAWAY
Gold
The Falls
Rosa
Fear of Drowning by numbers

BRUNO DUMONT
Life of Jesus
Humanity

MANOEL DE OLIVEIRA
Angelica

RAUL RUIZ

POETICS OF CINEMA, 2

Translated from the Spanish by
Carlos Morreo

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FOREWORD

The pages that follow constitute an attempt, a first attempt, to group together in the smallest possible space the corpus of opinions, intuitions and reasons that have moved me over the years to make films. It is inevitable that every so often a reason will be followed by a lack of reason, an intuition by a joke and an opinion by an act of bravado or a dare. Cinema is a military pursuit, and much of it reveals similar occupations: the starts at daybreak, the long marches, the lousy food and the martial recall. A solar art *par excellence*, cinema requires that one have one's head in the clouds and one's feet on the ground. Cinema, the first victim of the process of culture's industrialisation, has suddenly become the mother-art of the many applied arts (apparently, one of the distinctive features of our era is the tendency to link and unlink processes that appear *suddenly*).

To conceive of cinema as a 'mother-art' has more than one meaning. Let us remember that for years cinema was thought of as an essentially manipulative art, orchestrating all the fine arts that had preceded it. Theatre, music, narration, painting, architecture and dance, have all found in the territory called cinematography, an efficient way of understanding themselves and of cooperating with each other creatively, as if in some kind of opera of the world. In its own way, the activity of cinematography found in the many artistic disciplines' encounters and collisions, an operation of the spirit that in many ways resembled the religious practice that Chinese culture calls *Chang*: the art of manipulating religions. Buddhism via Chang, that is, by means of a game of mediations, interactions and reflections, is able to bring Taoism into its own perspective, and were one to remain perplexed, one could then have recourse to Confucianism. In the art of cinematography, painting—echoing the events of the world—reinvents theatre; the spirit of dance inspires and encourages new forms of expression, using the three thousand or so facial expressions the human face can create and convey. *Opera Mundi*, cinema, the mother-art has suddenly become a criminal art, the mother who with 'Medea's reasoning' kills her children, and like Cronus, devours them. Cinema has become a dead sea from which the agonising arts of our world emerge.

"Sad times", we might say; yet there is more. Cinema is also the mother-art of the different ways in which the practices that aim to explain and implicate cinema can be industrialised. A commonplace, one might say. Certainly, but let's not forget that the commonplace is the perfect refuge for all inexplicable events. "The 20th Century shall be religious or it shall not be", Malraux would often say. Nowadays to repeat this has become commonplace. The attack on the New York Twin Towers has transformed this saying into a terrible enigma. "Cinema, an art-form for all", is yet another commonplace; its sad counterpart can be found in thousands of empty cinemas, in cinema theatres transformed into sectarian temples. Filling public places is the essential commonplace of mass society, and with the disappearance of the idea of full employment we see its incomprehensible correlate.

Eleven years separate these lines from the first part of my *Poetics of Cinema*. Meanwhile the world has changed and cinema with it. *Poetics of Cinema 1* had much of a call to arms about it. What I write today is rather more of a *consolatio philosophica*. However, let no one be mistaken about this, a healthy pessimism may be better than a suicidal optimism.

"Light, more light", were Goethe's dying words. "Less light, less light", cried Orson Welles repeatedly on a set—the one and only time I saw him. In today's cinema (and in today's world) there is too much light. It is time to return to the shadows. So, about turn! And back to the caverns!

The ideas I will develop (at times in a somewhat erratic fashion) will turn upon three intuitions or metaphors. Firstly, the images that together make up a film determine what type of narration will structure the film and not the contrary. Secondly, a film is not made up or composed of a number of shots, rather it is *de-composed* by the shots; when we see a film of 500 shots, we also see 500 films. Thirdly, a film is valid, aesthetically valid, insofar as the film views the spectator as much as the spectator views the film.

Any reasonable reader will appreciate that these intuitions are rather more akin to feelings than general ideas. These feelings approximate emotions such as fear, vertigo, anger and adoration. In fact, they are closer to mysticism than to a philosophy of art. The prevailing idea in all the reflections brought together in this book is that a phenomenon as strange and as slippery as cinema needs to be approached in a rather poetic fashion. For too long a time we have tried to understand cinema using the most varied techniques of analysis. A certain part of film will allow itself to be examined: disassembled into parts. Film, like any other machine, no matter how infernal a machine it may be, will eventually submit itself to 'quality control' checks. Yet something will always escape analysis. The 'dark region'. The shadows. My purpose is to attack cinema beginning with this shadowy region.

For a long time, both artists and artisans involved in the film industry have used the term 'premise' to refer to a species of concept capable of uniting the various events the film proposes. One of the best premises I have ever heard goes like this: "a man who has lived his whole life honestly, in a moment of weakness commits a dishonest act; another man who has been dishonest throughout his whole life, in a moment of weakness, decides, and only for a brief instant, to be honest. What will happen when they finally meet?" Poor premises would omit the question at the end, simply ending with an affirmation: "ambition leads to ruination" or "redemption leads to glory". With time, premises disappeared and we were only left with the question at the end: "what would happen if..." and thus was born the *what if?*

My purpose is to use the rhetorical figure of the 'what if?' in order to approach the innumerable events that together make up any film: the visible and the hidden events, the implicit and the explicit, the explicable and the inexplicable.

The Chilean poet Jorge Tellier used to say that any film no matter how terrible it was would have at least five minutes of good poetry. Luis Buñuel would say that only bad novels could be adapted to film. And my uncle Daniel Muñoz Vera, a man of few words, would simply say: "cinema is poison".

It may be apparent that all three statements share a common trait: cinema breaks out or it seeks to break out from quality criteria, which, to a certain extent and with some luck, can be applied to all the other arts.

There is no bad film.

All films feed themselves on rubbish.

Every film is a *pharmakon*: a poison or a remedy depending on the particular case.

These will be the sorts of problems that we will attempt to approach in the following pages.

The first part of my *Poetics of Cinema 1* began with a statement that gave rise to many misunderstandings. It read: "In all narrative films—and all films are so to an extent—it is the image that determines the type of narration and not the contrary". I would like to begin by making it clear that I do not ignore the problems concealed in this affirmation, a heralding riddle worthy of a soothsayer. This confusion is partly due to the three terms that make up the statement: image, narration and determination. Firstly, image: the triad imago-loci-text that constitutes the corpus of techniques of classical memory, serves to summarise, in a certain way, what I understand by image. If we are able to reduce these three elements to their possible meaning in cinema we obtain the following: 'expressive image', 'sequence' or 'journey', and 'implicit narration'. As can be seen, the three terms are linked to a single process and are thus, in truth, inseparable. Let's bear in mind that in the art of memory, whoever hopes to remember would like to fix, say 'forever', an undetermined text, perhaps the Bible or a telephone directory, the names of the rivers of the world, or the many names of the lion in Arabic. Let's simply put to one side all the necessary and prior operations: arranging the items in a fixed order and attributing to them a certain dramaturgy. The chosen text has to be distributed along a precise journey in the most harmonious possible manner, and in a structure that is called a 'mental palace'. Whoever hopes to commit the text to memory is obliged to go through this palace following a pre-established itinerary. As in some sort of guided tour, the visitor will find in each room an image. This image will surprise him, given its unexpected character, its extravagance. We are dealing here with images designed to strike one's imagination, their purpose is to become *unforgettable*.

Alciato's emblems might offer us an idea as to the type of images that were often used by the worshipers of Mnemosyne in their (secret) lessons.[1] The images would be mechanically linked to the text that one hoped to memorise. At the same time, the text would follow the order of the journey, the guided tour. We

[1] Andrea Alciato, an early 16th Century legal jurist, famous for his *Emblematum liber* (1531). *The Book of Emblems* is a collection of over 200 Latin 'emblem poems', consisting of an enigmatic motto, its depiction, and a brief text.

should not be too concerned by the techniques, for we will never learn them, and it's not the purpose of these lines to explain them. Rather, we should try to transpose them on to the development of a film.

Let's say that the spectator is visiting this mental palace, there he will dwell within the film that we are viewing. To begin, we enter the first room. It's wide and at its centre someone has placed a sculptural work. Looking at it we can distinguish three young naked women who, laughing their hearts out, are wrenching teeth out of the mouth of a placid lion. The image impresses us 'on first view'. We would like to study its details, try to understand what it means, what it *could* mean, but the guide won't give us enough time. We must press on, he says. This image is here for the sole purpose of illustrating a text that reads: "In a village of La Mancha, the name of which I have no desire to call to mind".[2] Let's accept the game and continue, the nymphs and the lion mean: "In a village…" and nothing else. Our guide hurries us on to the next room, we enter a gallery and there we find seven ephebes, each holding a mirror, smiling and assuming suggestive poses. The guide will not allow us to delay and he says, "each time you remember this specular series, keep in mind that it means the following: 'there lived not long since one of those gentlemen that keep a lance in the lance-rack, an old buckler, a lean hack, and a greyhound for coursing' ". The rushed guide ushers us into the third room, where we find a green-eyed chimera, breast-feeding two children with a milk of changing colours, varying (it would seem, we believe—though there isn't enough time for this) according to 'the hours of the day'.

The image means (it denotes—a logician might say) a text that states "…" and there follow several lines from *Don Quixote*. We leave the palace with *Don Quixote* on our mind, together with many images that we would like to see again. It may be clear by now that what we have seen is a film subjected, by force, to a narrative development.

Still, these images will haunt us in dreams and call on us; so that we may come and meet them, though no longer with the duty of having to follow the trajectory imposed by the text. It has to be understood that each image, in the mnemonic system that has been described here, is surprising, and this surprise is itself the product of the unusual character and the erotic charge intrinsic to these images. To take a term frequently used by painters: these images are 'fixatives', once isolated they serve no function. They should not, yet here they are, carrying their 'expressive charge'. They persist in memory, beyond the text. They live their own lives.

One of the many available definitions of poetry would have poetry be the 'tension between allegory and mystery'. Guido Cavalcanti in a popular sonnet proposes an allegory for falling in love, conceiving of this event as an attack on a well-guarded fortress by courageous armies.[3] He writes:

[2] Cervantes' famous opening lines are taken from John Ormsby's classic English translation, *Don Quixote* (London, 1885).

[3] Guido Cavalcanti, a friend and contemporary of Dante.

E' vèn tagliando di sì gran valore,
che' deboletti spiriti van via:
[*And lays about him with so brute a might*
That all my wounded senses turn to flight.]

Completing the quatrain with:

riman figura sol en segnoria
e voce alquanta, che parla dolore.
[*There's a new face upon the seigniory,*
And new is the voice that maketh loud my grief.[4]]

He imagines the attacker entering the battle prepared to slaughter his opponent. The defenders are but "weak spirits" (*deboletti spiriti*) that flee and scatter in confusion. But suddenly the poet announces, "only a single figure remains" (*riman figura sol*). Commentators on the poem imagine it to be an empty armour from which a muffled voice (*voce alquanta*) whimpering plaintively can be heard. What could the author have meant? Learned men have proposed many explanations, none immune to contradiction. I, for one, believe that the whimpering hollow armour is but the inexplicable enigma that provides the poem with its requisite mystery, thus further nourishing the allegory.

In our walk through the mental palace, we have briefly considered three images There was no time to do anything else. The images served, certainly, to fix a text in our memory, yet it is inevitable that with the images there comes a tendency that might allow them to exceed their purpose, to scatter themselves among supplementary signs that are unnecessary for the mnemonic sequence. Ornamentation is overabundant.

In the first image, we saw three naked (and shapely) young women, who, laughing with complicity, are helping each other and holding hands as they apply themselves to the peculiar task of pulling out a lion's teeth. The lion curiously allows all this to happen, he even seems pleased to be deprived of his principal working instrument. Evidently, everything in the image has been developed to such a degree as to prevent any future revisions. The image is perceived at once and as a whole, though this whole does have parts and the parts are connected. It is inevitable that in imagining them, the artist adds disturbing details, though this will happen without the images failing in their mission The artist has been asked that the images be startling. However, stupor is often what arises from such unexpected and incoherent relations; thus giving way to a visual blunder, why does the lion

[4] *Voi che per li occhi mi passaste 'l core* ('You, who do breach mine eyes and touch the heart'), 'Sonnet XIII' in *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti* (Translated by Ezra Pound, Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1912).

allow his teeth to be pulled out? Why are two of the damsels facing each other with such an air of complicity, while the third, who pulls the lion's teeth out, has her eyes closed?

For the moment, we will avoid explanations and simply move on to the next image.

We enter the room with the seven smiling ephebes. We notice, firstly, that there is something disturbing about these adolescent smiles. It's not all quite what we had imagined it to be at first, an erotic game, an invitation to slip into something more comfortable. No, or at least it's not simply that, we should know that the erotic game—in the rhetoric of the mnemonic process—is its foremost and necessary condition. The ephebes are not smiling; they are actually showing their teeth. But to whom? It is obvious: to the mirror held by the nearest ephebe.

First find: the poses assumed by the ephebes are not erotic, but pragmatic, they merely incline and contort in order to better examine their teeth in the mirror. Only then do we realise that all the ephebes are lacking a tooth. All these boys have dreadful sets of teeth! And, they've all got swollen faces. They are not plump, as we may have thought initially, not at all, they have swollen faces; they've all got toothaches!

Up until now all is well, though what about the last adolescent? What about the one pointing with his mirror towards the first room where the nymphs and the lion are? Why does he point towards the lion, and why does the lion face his mirror?

The lion is looking at himself! He is observing what the nymph-dentist is doing to him!

First find: both images are linked. Second find: both, taken together, form an allegory on dentistry!

First suspicion: there is an internal relation between the mnemonic images. Many threads unite the parts of the sculptural group with what follows it. Though with what purpose? Perhaps none, perhaps several. One of the particularities of all artistic labour is a 'letting oneself be carried away', which allows the artist or artists that are caught in its movement to enter a 'game of vertigo'; that is, *Ilinx*, as Roger Caillois had referred to it.[5] Precisely, a form of vertigo, given that the proliferation of expressive elements endangers the *autopoietic* organism's corpus of signs, which, paradoxically, is also strengthened by it.

But, let us return to the various 'imagoes'.

The third image we had described consisted of a green-eyed chimera breastfeeding two children. The sculptural work functions in such a way that it

[5] Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games* (Translated by Meyer Barash, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, [1958] 1961)

reminds us, at first sight, of one of those fountains that we have seen many times before in illustrated Baroque catalogues (like those Mario Praz considers, for example). A fountain whose fantasy consists in permanently varying the colour of the water that emerges from the breasts of the chimera. But here on our second visit, our second viewing, we catch sight of a detail that had initially escaped our attention. The water that doubles as the imaginary milk changes its colour with a certain irregularity: from yellow to red, from red to blue and from blue to green, etcetera. And little by little (we have just realised, now that we do have time to examine the details of this 'moving' image) the variation in colours tends towards the colour green. What I mean to say is that at the end of each cycle, every time it reaches green, it lingers. Until we reach a point where it seems that the mammary liquid is set on green for such a long time, indeed so long as to seem an eternity. In addition, this green has the capacity to change the colour of the eyes of the breastfeeding children. Their eyes go green! However, it doesn't all end there. At the same time that the children take on this green, the ephebes' mirrors project a green light and both the nymphs' eyes and the lion's eyes also take on the green.

How should we interpret this process? By granting the colour green a certain meaning? As mere ornamentation?

I say that instead of losing ourselves among conjectures, which are no more than traps set by 'fascinations' (the Marquis of Villena had termed 'evil eye' a kind of fascination), we would do better to dwell on the 'allowing oneself to be carried away' that results from the numerous connections. We could call this the 'roller coaster effect'. Once more, the word 'vertigo' has come to our aid.

Vertiginous images, tremulous and throbbing images. Simply alive. Convulsive images; André Breton would have said: "Beauty shall be convulsive or it shall not be".

To recapitulate. It was long ago that we left behind the art of memory and its mechanisms in order to concentrate on the imago. We have already seen that the images in the mnemonic game serve to capture one's attention and do not illustrate, nor do they emphasise, the text that we are aiming to learn. What we have seen is something new, something that the art of memory could not have foreseen: images striving for their independence. They aim to make themselves noticeable, to have greater worth than that of being a mere sign. As they say in my country: "They are telling themselves their own story". Well, that and not much else is what happens in a film, when we shift our attention from the course that the narration proposes, and allow ourselves to be carried away by the involuntary associations that proliferate among images.

I propose the following game. Let's randomly choose a film and extract the story it tells. It's not impossible; it's not even hard. Recently some artists have done this, using simple procedures such as projecting the film in slow motion: at

one-hundredth its real duration, or simply by erasing or eliminating the close shots, or by enlarging them to the point where they become unrecognisable. A stimulating procedure. However, one can go further, we may subject the film to all the transformations already described. Once we have reached a certain point, new relations will proliferate amongst the images, regulated by 'sympathy' and 'repulsion'. Now comes the good bit, let's try to render explicit the new connections by telling other stories. These new fictions will not have the same characteristics as those of the mother-fiction. They will be, they might be, towards the beginning, reminiscent of a semi-destroyed fresco that we are attempting to restore. Though a very special fresco in which each part *demands* a different sort of restoration. For example, on first viewing these fragments, we come to see that one of them portrays the Passion of Christ, another fragment seems to be about a bacchanal, and yet another, the coronation of Henry IV, and a provisional whole, the killing of Saint Bartholomew.

Which should we believe? Which proposition merits our faith? Let's say, from the outset, that we should be willing to believe none and all of these propositions. It is the mystery that is set free in them that merits our faith.

By means of these simulations, I have aimed, above all, to play with the idea of restoring to the image its natural ability to engender stories. In the Western tradition, for many centuries, and for many more in the Chinese tradition, images both in painting and in poetry have had good neighbourly relations. The list is rather long: the *Laocoon* (both as poem and sculptural group), Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and Poliziano's related poem, the images of D'Annunzio and the paintings by the pre-Raphaelites. Further, the idea of an image without an accompanying text is but the exception in almost all Chinese painting. The text neither incites nor produces the image, nor is the opposite the case. If there happens to be a good relation between image and text, it will be because a respectable distance is maintained between them. This is possible because we are dealing with poetry and painting. Narrative art invades and subjects the image, imposing its rules on the image and rendering it an ornament.

As is well known the word 'ornament' has a bad reputation. A commonplace—one more amongst many—would have truth be a form of nakedness. Another, that nakedness impedes our seeing everyday images (and thus also images of truth), thus seeing nakedness itself as an ornament. A third commonplace states that all dress or vestment serves to foster a desire for nakedness, and that this desire is closer to truth than nakedness and clothing To make us desire nakedness, though on the condition that *it render itself suggestive*... Suggestion is, of course, the collection of gestures and attitudes that lead us from concealment to revelation. Truth, then, might reside in the process, in the passage from one state to the other By means of three commonplaces we have reached, as

can be seen, the most common of all, a commonplace truth concerning 'movement': the passage from one state to another, displacement, metamorphosis, process; there is no lack of words for it in the history of art. Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, to whom we owe, or so I have been told, the best written account of the history of philosophy—and whose speciality is displaying in a 'fan-shaped' manner the many positions that can be taken on problems of aesthetics—believes that a certain form of truth, a 'horizon of plausible facts', is constituted precisely by the restating of statements and the remaking of facts.[6]

Let's allow ourselves a final commonplace, provisionally final: the image does not copy nature but rather *the manner in which it copies*. Moreover, for this to be so, the image must move at least in the imagination of whoever looks at the image. A recent theory of vision claims that we perceive the world 'jerkily', that is, by means of juxtaposing instantaneous images to which we grant movement. Illusory movement, to be sure, though verifiable, otherwise we would spend most of our time on the floor. Here we have come across a problem that is often forgotten by those who meditate on the philosophy of the moving image: the important role played by the inevitable immobility within any series of images that is proposed to us in movement. When we see a series of moving images, we cannot deny that they move in different directions, at different speeds, according to different ways of deploying and withdrawing, unfolding and folding up; like a kit bag gone mad: covering over, baring open, suggesting. And according to an order that escapes us, within this movement we find the play of many varying appearances and disappearances. There is, I sense, meaningfulness to this escape, it allows us to see the 'immobile image' beneath the irreversible chain of events. Whoever has been fascinated by Russian or Greek iconography will understand what it is that I am here referring to: many of these icons, in fact, almost all of them, are presented as if they were exhibiting scenes of piety; the same can be said, to a certain extent, about cartoons (*teveos* we say in my language, which can quite easily be horrendous when careless). However, in such images or fixed scenes, the moments of an eternal history are set out in such a way that we are led towards a game of combinations. A game that some 17th Century rhetoricians—Vicente Carducho, for example—label 'antichrony', and I term *anti-epopee*, within which, for example, both crucifixion and annunciation (*antichrony*) could coexist, and in which characters from different epochs participate in the same scene (*anti-epopee*): Adam discussing with Plato and Raphael.[7] In this crossing over or intersecting one sees, not an idea or a logic, but primarily, I believe, an image. An immobile but ebullient image; this is the sort of immobility that I am talking about. A Platonist might say: "The Form of the painting, the unique and multiple image towards which all drama, *peripeteia*,

[6] Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *Historia de seis ideas* (Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, [1975] 1987).

[7] Vicente Carducho, Spanish painter of Italian origin (also known as Vincenzo Carducci). A well-known rival of Diego Velázquez and author of *De las excelencias de la pintura* (Madrid, 1633).

strives, and from where it shall return freed and purged". Given that I am talking about icons, this may lead to confusion, yet I believe that in any film—if there is no pretension to transcendence in it—the same phenomenon will arise. Beneath the sequences that will succumb, the one in the other, and thus until the film's happy conclusion, there remains an immobile presence. An image, I insist, not an idea; that is to say, figural. An originary and terminal image.

We can approach what I realise is a difficult idea to come to terms with, I acknowledge it, by means of a somewhat more contemporary notion: the morphogenetic field. Facing the seemingly unlikely fact that human beings do reproduce themselves in other human beings, Alan Turing designed a sort of mirror that he labelled the 'morphogenetic space'.

We shall put to one side the technical details of the problem. It will suffice to say that this model served as the basis for the creation of concepts that should allow us to understand this generative image, sum and synthesis of the turbulent sequences we often see in a film. In the first instance, let us leave behind the Platonic temptation of positing a primordial image, which would count as the origin of the forms we can see. Rather, the immobile image beneath all turbulences—it is the latter that we term *peripeteias*—is itself the result of the *peripeteias*, though it unites them and at the same time forms them, that is, it offers them a certain consistency. Yet, the image is itself modified by the peripeteias that are reflected in it. This idea is somewhat original, given that it avoids stating that the meaningfulness of the visible is due to narration or a narrative medium. What I am proposing here is that the cohesion of these images, gathered on the edge of the screen, does not lead towards a history that could be summarised in words, but rather, towards an open model that, at times, may be seen as the mother-image from which all images proceed. Yet, the mother-image is also capable of being modified by the images that both reveal and conceal it. To state this in common language, that is, in the manner of a commonplace: there is interaction between the immobile image and the tempestuous ebullience of the mosaic-like images that envelop it. We shall return to this theme later when we propose that a film is valuable, expressive, intense and memorable, insofar as the coming and going of seeing and being seen is richer: when I see moving images, the immobile image beneath these, sees me.

Let's put this problem aside and return to situations that are more readily acceptable, for they belong to the everyday. Many among us, not only filmmakers, have more than once had the impression that a whole corpus of events has been summarised in a single image, whose complexity could not let itself be rendered by means of description. In such cases, we are dealing with image-situations, that is to say, images in which the parts are articulated by a closed dramaturgy, incapable of further development. Something akin to a self-referential allegory.

Three examples.

One day as I strolled through the dusty city of Santiago de Chile, I saw, not far away from the city centre, a young girl of about twenty who was watering the footpath. But it wasn't all of the footpath, just a spot. A small section of pavement, and she wasn't looking at what she was doing, she wasn't looking at anything. She was staring off into the distance with an expression ranging from disillusioned indifference to reconciled desperation, only to return to a gesture that resembled a yawn. I had an errand to run so I left, and by the time I returned, half an hour later, she was still there, watering the same spot and standing still, though she was now surrounded by a group of bystanders who watched the water in astonishment and boredom. That's it. End of image.

Another day, not far away from the earlier spot, I saw a group of people surrounding a boy who was lying down on the ground. They were questioning him.

- "Are you ill?"
- "Where do you live?"
- "Do your parents know that you are here?"

In addition to many other questions, to all of which the child would invariably answer:

- "I don't know".

I left to run an errand and by the time I returned, the boy was no longer there, nor were the bystanders who had been questioning him. However, two weeks later while on the bus I caught a glimpse of the child in the distance, once more surrounded by people. A few weeks later, I saw him yet again.

Although it was not the same boy, the passers-by were the same people, or at least two of them were the same. Though I can't be certain because all Chileans look alike.

Another day I was on a balcony, looking at the sunset from the tenth floor. The sun's light made the snow that covered the Andean *cordillera* the colour of blood. Suddenly I felt myself drawn to a strange figure down below on the street. I searched for my binoculars and looked at the figure. It was a man of about thirty, who was on his knees as if praying. Calmly, he ate a hotdog, while every now and then he would bend over and look down towards a hole that lay before him. One of those holes that had been dug many months earlier by the Department for Public Works.

How, when and why did these images come together in my mind and prompt me to make a film about Chile? It would be hard to say, though I suspect that the bridge that linked them had already been built before my arrival on the streets of Santiago. It was certain that the three images had little to do with each other, directly or indirectly. They did not form a true allegory. It may have been that, like in the previous Guido Cavalcanti example, these were symbolic images

whose coherence was the product of their *inaccessible centre*, their inexplicable nature. Or worse, images that due to explanation had become inert, incapable of developing into fictions.

Professor Simon Schama tells us in his *The Embarrassment of Riches*—a philosophical explanation for the Dutch Tulip Crisis of the early 17th Century—that this book was born out of a revelation: a scene he witnessed in a house where a woman meticulously cleaned a section of the floor, and only that section.[8] In addition, Dr Rupert Sheldrake tells us that his love for biology was aroused by the discovery, upon returning from his parents' country home, that the stakes that made up the wire fencing bordering the estate had resuscitated and flowered.[9]

To return and restate: my goal is to show that certain germinal images or instant fictions, are the best starting point for a film that wishes to have a poetic pretext.

On many occasions, I have been asked whether: "All types of cinema must necessarily be poetic. Might a simply narrative cinema not be possible in our times? A type of cinema for which things are simply interesting as peripeteias?"

Yes and no.

I have already said this before: cinema is condemned to be poetic. It cannot but be poetic. One cannot ignore this aspect of its nature. For poetry will always be there, within our reach. If so, then why not use it?

Although it is true—and I am repeating myself here—that in most films poetry is incidental, more often than not it's there partly due to the fact that it has been ignored; nor is poetry really found in so-called *beautiful things*: rivers, landscapes, mountains and sunsets. Rather, we find it in the haphazard intersecting of sequences, in the instances of narrative incoherence and in crossing sight lines.

Yet, it is there. It is.

From this point of view, poetry is endemic in cinema. Though we shall return to this theme soon enough.

[8] Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Vintage Books, [1987] 1997).

[9] Rupert Sheldrake, biologist, known for his theories on "Morphic Fields" and "Morphic Resonance". *A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Morphic Resonance* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1999).

SHADOW

We see a lit-up set, it's ready for the filming of a scene. The technicians await the actors. Everything is ready. A type of silence punctuated by coughing sets in. Then a total silence comes about, almost strident, noisy. Suddenly a voice is heard which startles everyone.

- "Where does that light come from?"

It's probably the director, who has just looked through the lens and found the framing out of balance, not because of the arrangement or positioning of the elements in the frame, but because there is a section that is overexposed.

- "Where does that light come from?"

No one answers. The director of photography points with a finger towards the light source, and walks out to have a cigarette. He has taken offence.

There is silence. Someone speaks:

- "That question was phrased incorrectly. One should ask, 'where do those shadows come from?' "

More silence, a silence louder than the previous one, only interrupted by the sound that the match makes when struck against the matchbox, lighting the director of photography's cigarette outside the studio.

- "What was that noise?" asks one of the assistants.

- "Badly phrased question. One ought to say, 'where do those silences come from?' " It's the same person who had rephrased the earlier question, 'where do those shadows come from?'

- "Who are you?" asks the director.

- "I am a question corrector," replies a man of about fifty, who is cleaning his glasses and wearing a tie. The director sighs.

- "Everyday they come up with a new job! Well, then, where do those shadows come from?"

- "It depends, some shadows are merely the exact compensation of light, its double. A lighting technician is above all a maker of shadows. Though nobody seems to notice."

- "That may be so, but in this scene the light is out of balance, and that's a fact."

- "The lights are not well distributed, that's another fact. For example, that spotlight lights up that piece of furniture, and the shadow that is cast as its effect, not only hides the chair behind the sideboard, but also hides the shadow that the chair would have otherwise cast, as a consequence we have a quarrel amongst shadows."

- "Does that matter?"

- "Well, we don't know, but it would certainly be interesting if it did."

- "According to you, there is a difference between one shadow and another."

- "Given that a shadow is part of an object, and an important part at that, one would have to conclude that each shadow is indeed singular."

- "I thought that all shadows belonged to the same half-light or *penumbra*."

- "Only in the same way that all lights are part of the same blinding light. Light blinds, shadows show."

- "For someone who asks questions, you seem to answer just as many. We don't need philosophers around here."

- "That's not what the studio thinks. I am the studio's philosopher."

- "And what's your job?"

- "To destroy all that seems evident," answers the philosopher as he disappears amongst the shadows.

The director of photography has come back; he orders that a light be turned off. Immediately the philosopher comes into view once more.

- "Who is that?"

- "I am what the shadow reveals."

The director of photography now orders that another light be turned off, and another character appears, unconcealed by shadows.

- "An intruder!"

They turn off another light and a second intruder makes his appearance. They turn off all the lights, only then do they notice that a multitude of intruders have invaded the studio. These intruders are kindly asked to leave.

Once again, silence sets in. The noisy silence of well-built studios.

- "What's the matter with the actors?" the director asks.

- "They're finishing up with make-up," replies an assistant. They are still waiting. The director of photography adds some lights and the shadows return, once more, resolutely.

But now they know that as soon as the excessive light reaches the set's objects, the shadows, which are but the natural consequence of light, will return. Ready to be inhabited.

And the intruders have come back; they all know it, though no one will say anything. Until a voice that can be heard from the half-light, says, in a grave tone:

- "We are here, we have returned, and this time you won't find it so easy to make us leave."

- "But who are you!"

- "They are the shadows' spokespersons," replies the consultant philosopher.

- "Do shadows speak?"

- "No, but their spokespersons do."

- "So what about the shadows?"

- "They remain silent, but their silence can be heard."

- "Interesting," says the director who for many years now had thought about making a film featuring a character called "The Shadow Assassin".

- "Here we are, once more," repeats the shadows' spokesperson.

- "Well, then, say something."

- "We've got nothing to say."

- "Perhaps your shadow doesn't, but mine does," interrupts another voice.

- "Who is that?"

- "Every type of shadow has its own ambassador," says the philosopher. And the one that has just spoken represents another type of shadow."

- "Are there many types of shadows?" asks the director.

- "For the time being, there are two. By the time the film is finished there will be four."

- "Interesting!" cries out the assistant, who has for years thought about a film that would feature four invisible characters called "The Three Musketeers from Beyond the Grave".

- "But, what are the first two types of shadows?"

- "We have already seen that a first type of shadow is born out of the lighting of objects," says the philosopher. Then, addressing the set, he proceeds with a roll call.

- "Wardrobe!"

- "Present," says a woman's voice.

- "Table!"

- "Present!"

- "Leather sofa!"

- "Right here, present!"

One by one all the shadows answer to their name.

- "Half-open door."

No one answers.

- "Painting!"

Nothing.

- "Shadows of painting."

The stifled laughter of young shadows can be heard.

- "Shadows that cannot be seen!"

The barking of dogs can be heard in the distance.

- "Shadow of shadows!"

A cat meows. The meowing is full of resentment.

The director is now losing his patience.

- "You told me that there were two types of shadows, two here with us and two coming later. I have already heard a few."

- "The shadows that can be seen, those are two," replies the philosopher, unperturbed. "But there are shadows that we cannot see: the shadow of my bones, the shadows within the closed wardrobe. These shadows are of the second type. We know they're there, without even seeing them, and they refuse to go away, they want to appear."

- "Why talk about them? What can't be seen doesn't exist."

- "Wrong," replies the philosopher, "only that which can't be seen exists."

- "Solipsism!" shouts someone.

It's the philosopher behind the philosopher.

- "That's life," says the first philosopher, letting out a sigh. The studio consultants have come to think that each consultant philosopher must, in turn, himself have a consultant, one who would follow him like a shadow and who would verify and certify his mistakes... My consultant has just detected a logical flaw, which makes me think that, perhaps, a shadow is but an error.

- "Contradiction. There must either be a shadow or a mistake."

- "Fallacious inference!"

Let us leave the philosophers in their discussion. They will not get past these sketchy thoughts, but what has just been said rings true, or at least, 'it gives us something to think about'. Two shadows? That reminds me of something. Some years ago, I read a dialogue between a theologian by the name of Mathew Fox and the biologist Rupert Sheldrake.[10] What they had to say in turn could be summarised with a statement made by one of G. K. Chesterton's characters in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, who thought that in order to see clearly, the best thing one could do was lock oneself up in a dark room.[11] Both men played with the idea of penumbra, the half-light, in slightly different ways. The theologian carried his arguments towards postulates reminiscent of negative theology, which we shall not discuss here.

[10] 'Dialogue between Matthew Fox and Rupert Sheldrake' in *Resurgence Magazine* (1999).

[11] Chesterton's novel reads: "He has a fancy for always sitting in a pitch-dark room. He says it makes his thoughts brighter". Chapter IV, *The Man Who Was Thursday* (New York: Dover, 1908).

Sheldrake was concerned with certain experiences common to palaeontologists, who when lost in pitch-dark caverns would after a few hours be struck by pangs of light. The experience would gradually intensify: this was an experience of pure light, an amorphous light—let's say—that resided at the centre of this darkness. The discussion gradually led them towards the formalisation of a new theory of *morphogenetic fields*. Nevertheless, for us artisans or architects—of the figures that result from the, at times, uneasy coexistence between light and shadow—what is truly of interest here is, above all, that were we to accept the idea that at the centre of darkness lies pure light, and likewise, that at the centre of light dwell light-giving shadows, we may deduce that the practice of chiaroscuro can lead us towards a type of cinema in which one practices in a different way—from how it is usually done—the negotiation between the visible and the hidden.

In order to attain this we will need the mediation of a certain number of theoretical fictions.

Let us see.

At a certain moment during the previous conversation, the consultant philosopher had said that although "shadows remain silent", "their silence can be heard". What could he have meant?

I am indebted to Martin Landau—a man well acquainted with the running of studios during the 50's and 60's—for the following phrase: "The harsh silence of studios". Landau believed that the silence of studios could at times be so overwhelming that it would unsettle the actors. As he was an authentic product of the USA, anything he said always had a pragmatic basis to it.

The silence of studios is striking to the point that a whistling sound can be heard in one's ear, resembling the whistle one hears after a cannon has been fired or after an explosion.

We ought to try to link this type of whistling sound with the shadows that correspond to a filmed image.

Filmed shadows, we should bear in mind, are moving shadows. Hence, the silence that supplements and completes these filmed shadows should be considered a *moving silence*.

Nowadays moving a sound is by no means a difficult task. One can simply make a sound shift from the right speaker to the left speaker and then move it on to the rear speaker. However, I wonder, would we be able to do the same with a shadow? In principle there is nothing that impedes this if we allow each shadow a spotlight, such that it would follow the moving object that creates the shadow. We should remember the experiment that F. W. Murnau's technicians undertook in his film *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927). First, one films the sun rising, then one rewinds the film, and waits for the sunset without moving the camera from its position, and finally one shoots again. Theoretically, the result ought to be a sense of sadness, given that with

daybreak and as the sun's rays reveal everything, inexplicable shadows (resulting from the shot and superimposed sunset) invade the image at the same time.

Many years ago Henri Alekan told me about a cinematographer from the early days of talking pictures, whose name I wilfully forget. As the photographer found it difficult to adapt to the new limits that direct sound had imposed, he invented a technique, very much of his own making (he was a notorious eccentric). First, he would have all the set's lights tuned off, he would then close his eyes and ask his lighting technicians and grips, to each stand beside an object on the set. Then he would name them, one by one.

He would say, for example, "Daniel!" and whoever was being addressed would then tap the object that fortune had given him. He would then continue, "André!" And André would knock lightly on the wardrobe. In this manner, one by one, all the technicians would grant sound to the objects on the set. The photographer who at all times had his eyes shut, would thus picture all the objects until he had saturated the whole set. Finally, he would ask everyone to tap his or her object at the same time, thus having a *joint audition*. Only then would he open his eyes. Only then would he confront the half-light, the penumbra, and, according to the photographer, did he obtain the *double view of the set* [*la doble visión del decorado*].

The *first view* was of the totality of objects, lit up individually and separated by channels of penumbra. The *second view* consisted of lighting the web of shadows that surrounded the objects, while at the same time, and one by one, turning the spotlights off (all of this would be done mentally).

The end light was a combination of these two forms of lighting.

- "And what about the actors?" I asked.

- "The actors weren't moving," Alekan replied, which solved the issue of any parasitical noises and the need for microphones.

- "So, there was no action?"

- "Yes, plenty," Alekan said. "The lights would move, and they revealed the unceasing movement of the actors' emotions."

- "And what films did he make?"

- "None," Alekan replied. "He never got beyond the rehearsals."

- "And can I get hold of the rehearsals?"

- "They all burnt during the fire that consumed the cinematheque."

They say that the person who organised the burning of the cinematheque did this with the intention of destroying all traces of this terrible example. However, it's not true: I investigated, I read reports.

I know that this photographer did exist. He went by the name of Henri Alekan, and he was the one who in his backyard burnt all evidence of such extravagance.

In reality, he was only modifying a well-known and common procedure of 1950's Hollywood, or perhaps we ought to call it an inversion. As was the case in the situation that Alekan refers to, in Hollywood there were also two such moments. First, one would erase all the shadows cast by objects by flooding the set with light. Once the set revealed its objects unpolluted by shadows and radiating in themselves, only then would one add more light, additional light, much more light; though this time round it would be directed to create shadows. A very peculiar type of shadow, shadows that had been lit *from within*.

Apparently, reaction to this procedure would later manifest itself by taking recourse to so-called 'Northern Light'. A form of lighting inspired by Rembrandt, whereby the set would only receive the light that came through its windows. Light and shadow, thought to be real, yet in reality, ghostly, unreal and oneiric.

Another photographer, whose name I forget—someone whom Alekan would often call his 'enemy' with a familiarity not exempt of friendliness—used a technique that he himself referred to as 'arbitrary'. He liked lighting furniture and actors *from behind*, stressing their outline and forcing (muscular) shadows on to them. Not entirely arbitrary, given that what he achieved was the reinterpretation of shadows, a task generally attributed to the actors and the story that is being told. What I am trying to reveal with the cases I have picked out, is an eloquent impression that I have been left with after many years of infancy in parts of the world where electrical lighting was the exception. Cinema ought to continually play with the harmony and lack of harmony that exists between narrative evidence and visual doubt (that which I have just seen—have I indeed seen it?).

What's more, it's not as many believe; that shadows are responsible for an image's mystery, and light for the solution to this mystery. Salvador Dalí knew what he was talking about when he explained to Hitchcock that in dreams there is an excess of light, not its lack. Dalí, who lived in sunny regions, knew that it was at noon, at the brightest time of day when devils were let loose. In fact, in our dreams we barely, if ever, see the sun. In certain dreams, in mine for example, images always appear as if run through water, as if being boiled.

Though let us return to the facts and miracles proper to the marriage between light and shadow. A first formula states: "light is an answer to *penumbra*". If the question-answer relation does not really explain the issue at hand, it can at least be useful.

Let us look at a classic case that has already been mentioned: the Invisible Man. Let us imagine that this poor wreck is invisible only when a light is shone on him, and is visible solely when he enters a shadowy region and in a sombre manner; he is thus a shadow over a shadow. It is the shadow that lights, that illuminates: shadow over shadow. It seems we have come back to the philosopher. There may well be shadows that are darker than others. A banal solution. There may be, due to the nature of shadows themselves, 'presences' that are half *pareidolia*, half

dilemma. As pareidolia, these visual signs can be seen when poor lighting facilitates our seeing nonexistent beings, the products of our imagination; as dilemma, these visual signs seem to present solutions that are equally valid, for example, the image is both a duck and a rabbit.

This happens in spaces that are not entirely in darkness, spaces where an object enters the dark, step by step. Thus, we generally assume that part of the object extends itself into the dark. Moreover, in between the absolute darkness and the light that reveals, there is a region, let's call it a crepuscular region. There dwell the *pareidolia-dilemmas*—and their half-and-half presence—it is in that region where misunderstandings and monsters are brought into existence. Monsters and other fantastical figures are our creations; we complete them, each one of us. It is here that we find the coat thrown on to the floor becoming a gorilla-seal breaking out of a table-stove. It is here that I find myself in a world surrounded by shadows. There are mental disorders that interrupt the instant of correlation between our perception of a thing and the copy the mind produces. A representation made in order to verify the accuracy of our perception (the figure over there, for example, that man is not just any man, it's you). At that instant there are interferences, accidents, disjunctions that allow us to see exactly the types of demons and monsters I have just mentioned. Demons insofar as they are mediations, monsters insofar as they are combinations. In these moments—before a simple and modest dose of lithium annuls the effects—we enter a world where the visible facts (given that these are 'appearances') are capable of establishing a different sort of commerce with the surrounding world to that of the everyday (i.e. the *res extensa*). A world of appearances and illusion in which verification is replaced by strangeness, stupor and wonder. I have thought of the terms 'appearance' and 'illusion' as they relate to the 17th Century Theatre of the Spanish Golden Age. One must know that *appearance* here denotes the 'moving set' [*decorado en movimiento*] and *illusion*, the 'fixed set' [*decorado fijo*]. And according to the meaning I give to these terms, 'appearances' are the pareidolia-dilemmas in constant transformation, and, in my view, 'illusion' refers to the working out or resolution of the many waves of changing images in a final and definable though unlikely image: this battle between dog-men and rainbow-bees, suddenly ends up being (and can be explained away as if it were no more than) a city-of-light suspended among snail-like clouds.

I should make it clear that the implicit theory of the visual that can be unearthed in what I have just said, is based upon the ideas of the holistic neurologist Karl Pribram[12], though it alludes indirectly to a theory of knowledge held by Stanislaw Ulam. According to the latter, creative thought (and all thought, no matter how mundane, is really creative) works by using a series of linked ideograms, which

[12] Karl Pribram, an Austrian neurologist known for his work on the 'holonomic model' in collaboration with the physicist David Bohm.

may either be visual or aural, and which is deployed stenographically (by shorthand, says Ulam), traversing language's course in an orthogonal way.[13] We think—Ulam believes—by means of synthetic images that follow each other at great speeds, landing every now and then on linguistic fields (i.e. natural languages), though never staying there for too long and flying off again to return to a grammatical airport.

Let us see. When we perceive facts and events from the outside world—though not as 'outside' as it may seem, we shall return to this theme later—we are confronted at the level of the imagination by chains of images made up of visual misunderstandings leading to a unitary or singular vision; an illusion. Meanwhile, a chain of synthetic images, say mental ideograms, evolves around the corpus of language by trying to reach and visualise its beyond. It may well be that this is the world that madmen and those who hallucinate inhabit, and perhaps not everyone is as fortunate, but it is here that many scientific intuitions have come about.

Perhaps, though this is no guarantee at all. In fact, most of us act in a rather more reasonable manner. Yet, in truth, are artistic forms reasonable? In other words, does art's measure of reason—reason being that way of momentarily binding oneself to a world where we live and which lives off us—remain the same when we dream, see a film or read a poem, or when we walk down a street observing its rules, traffic lights, and the general way of being of the stairs we have just taken?

There are two extreme states of being that oppose each other: dreaming and walking without falling. In fact, when we walk we are committed to not falling. When we dream, or at least in voluntary dreams, which are precisely what works of art are about, we do our best to fall (to be precise, the letting oneself be carried away by art is stronger here than it is in so-called half-sleep, *vigilia*). The obstinate or recalcitrant reader will ask himself, what does any of this have to do with dreams, illusion and appearances? Further, what do dreams and illusions have to do with shadows? It's true that in my reasoning I have tried to amalgamate the 'undefined' and a certain understanding of 'shadow'. We may not be able to affirm what it is that dwells within shadows, though we may imagine it. Further still, we may imagine it in various ways and all 'at the same time'.

At once? At the same time? At what time? One or many? All of which might be irreversible? On the other hand, are there 'times' that may simply not be? Questions that lack answers, to which we will return time and time again in the pages to come. It's true that there is a certain unanimity among the 'resonances' that reach us from the shadows. I think it's not difficult to accept that in the territory inhabited

[13] Stanislaw M. Ulam, an eminent Polish mathematician. "It is possible that human thought codes things not in terms of words or syllogisms or signs, for most people think pictorially, not verbally. There is a way of writing abstract ideas in a kind of shorthand, which is almost orthogonal to the usual ways in which we communicate with each other by means of the spoken or written word. One may call this a *visual algorithm*." *Adventures of a Mathematician* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), p. 183.

by penumbra there are various types of shadows, not only in relation to light, but also in relation to themselves. Nicholas of Cusa's expression, "ultrametric spaces", that is, spaces that exceed the measurable, or rather, spaces that do not require measurement, can be applied to the shadow region that stands before us.[14] In chiaroscuro, each shadow stands in solidarity with a light that illuminates what it obscures, what it fills with shadows. In addition, the shadow that is beside it, its neighbour, is in solidarity with its object: the sombre façade deals with its shadow in a very different manner to the wardrobe, which barely lets itself be seen, engrossed as it is in another shadow, another penumbra. All this is quite clear. However, let us play with these images.

Let us propose, first, to take a photograph of the set. We can enlarge it and then gradually replace all of the set's objects with enlarged and cut-out photographs. Thus at the end we would only have visible things, 'the object as viewed'. Only that which can be seen exists. The sombre region of shadows is the same all over the set. For an instant or so, we find it hard to tell the difference between the set made out of a group of illuminated objects and the present set, made out of cut-out photographs. Later we sense that something awkward has happened, a sense of unreality overcomes us. It comes from everywhere. First, the eye, after various verifications, realises that there has been a loss of depth, given that each photographic cut-out has kept the shallowness that is proper to its way of being. Next, it's the perception of immobility or stillness that is evident: we are standing before a group of shallow and incomplete objects. Let's imagine that a light breeze touches the photographs. A slight tremor makes each and every one of the cut-outs quiver. Then we impose a minor and almost imperceptible light. A strange feeling of unreality runs through us. Despite our knowing that these are cut-out and lit photographs, each one having its own spotlight (and every spotlight has a little cut-out window that follows the outline of the photograph it shines on), despite our understanding this, we are nevertheless impressed by this world made out of shallow fragments that a single shadow separates or brings together.

What has happened?

What is most likely, I believe, is that the passage from a group of things that are all partially lit by a single light and sundered by many shadows, towards an image that consists of fragments, which are separated or made distinct by many lights and brought together by a single shadow, has prompted the intense emotion of being carried off towards a mental world wherein something akin to the primordial shadow dwells. We should not let ourselves be fooled, the primordial shadow is merely a conceptual simulacrum; it is useful insofar as it nurtures histories and situations that will pull us out of the ordinary and carry us over into a world of *strangely missing events*. A world where a feeling that we may call 'anxious strangeness' prevails. Let's return to what we stated earlier: cinema can and should

[14] Nicholas of Cusa, *Dialectical Mysticism* (Translation by Jasper Hopkins. Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1985).

play; by constantly moving from narrative evidence (what Greek rhetors referred to as *enargeia*) to visual doubt: am I seeing what I am seeing? And then from visual doubt working through itself on to a new narrative evidence. This can be achieved by means of the uninterrupted modification of regions of light and shadow.

Though we must not forget that 'uninterrupted modification' does not mean that we should constantly alter the sources of light, thus deploying and redeploying shadows like dancing origami. There are many ways in which one can modify the region of shadows without moving the camera or altering the lighting. The soundtrack, even in its present state of technical evolution, can make the same shadows seem different.

Take the following case as an example:

A set that has been lit up with a single source of available light, a small window found high up in the set (it's the library of a scholar, let's say Dr. Faust). The light changes slowly and in accordance with the arrival of dusk and the evening. While the penumbra sets in, we hear the noise of ripping paper, the noise is not easily identified, especially given that it seems to orbit around us: to the left of the screen, then outside the screen, now to the left of the spectator and then immediately behind us. Then it can be heard at the centre of the screen and behind us simultaneously, and later, once more at the centre and behind the spectator. We come to see that the noise actually has two origins. We notice that someone is about to emerge from out of the shadows, out of the penumbra. It looks like it may be an old man, dressed in a long tunic and a cap. But we are not sure. The old man moves through the zone of shadows, we can tell by his steps. Dusk seems to have become eternal. The old man, or rather this *presence*, passes by the right side of the spectator, and we sense him leaving while at the same time the noise of paper being ripped becomes louder, making our skin crawl.

End of scene.

We haven't really seen anything, only shadows, and due to the noises we can tell that something is happening about which we have no precise knowledge. We can develop the scene, insofar as we are not compelled to settle it immediately in any narrative terms, leading it further into its own strangeness. For example, we can have many people cough from out of the shadows at the precise moment when the old man's steps fade into the distance, as if in the intermission of a concert. While at the same time, we can hear the cries of a dying person coming from an adjacent room, and in the distance the ringing of seven bells, and many voices on the street shouting: "It has come!" "It's coming!" "God have mercy on us!"

We have imagined many things, but above all we have witnessed a region of shadows undergo metamorphosis. Let us further develop the scene.

When we first hear the commotion from the streets, we also hear someone shout, and always from the shadows, "C'mon, we've got to go!" And another voice:

"This way! This way!" And yet another: "Careful, don't let them see you!"

We can hear what sounds like a stampede, still without seeing anything. The steps of many invisible characters run up the cinema corridor just behind us and then only silence can be heard. A deep silence. It is at this moment that the only visible event occurs. Through the window, a sheet of paper falls and lands right in the middle of the well-lit area.

Well, we could quite easily continue playing without end with the modifications of the shadows by means of sounds. To be certain, there are many other ways. All of these could impress us, excite us, more or less, according to what the poetic presumption (the *parti pris*) may be in each case. The visible images have come from far away. They emerge from the primordial shadow.

It might be that we have ignored the role of light and lights. The glow: a *fulguration* that blinds us. We may accept the poetic *parti pris*, declaring that everything originates in the fulgurating light that blinds, which when calm makes it possible for us to see the visible world. A starting point that is equally as valid as the perspective of shadows.

Yet, were I asked for my opinion, I would have to say that this is an imaginal concept, with many possibilities inscribed in it; that is, the visible world is born out of the clash between primordial shadow and blinding fulguration. We know, after having read various publications that aim towards the popularisation of science, that at the centre of light there coexists as much shadow as there is light. If we study the electromagnetic spectrum, we should see that the light in which we move, the same light that makes it possible for us to see, represents, in fact, a very small portion of the visible world. Ultraviolet rays have made it possible for us to discover another world, a world that overlaps with what we actually see. Furthermore, both X-rays and Y-rays are capable of revealing yet another world and the same can be said about infrared rays.

The educated English of the 18th Century were much impressed with the case of Professor Sanderson, blind since childhood, successor to Newton's Chair and professor of Optics. Francesco Algarotti[15] tells of an occasion when he met Professor Sanderson and was able to discuss Molyneux's famous problem with him (which I believe I mentioned in the *Poetics of Cinema 1*). We should remember that according to both Molyneux and Locke, were a blind person to recover her sight, she would be incapable of distinguishing between a sphere and a cube without touching the objects. But Algarotti informs us that he heard Sanderson affirm that he would have no trouble at all in distinguishing the shapes: "It is true that I do not know what sort of impression a cube or a sphere would make upon the sense of vision," said the acutely blind man. And he continues:

[15] Comte Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764), 'Optica para ciegos' in *Cruz y Raya: Revista de afirmación y negación* (Vol. XII, n° 35, 1936), pp. 91-93.

"Just as I do not know what sort of things shadow and light might be. Nevertheless, there is something that I do know very well, and it is that one is the opposite of the other. Therefore, in the same manner that silence is the opposite of sound, likewise the appearances of light and shadow, be these whatever they may, will be wholly different and each other's opposite. Hence, I would demand that the following be done: 'Place under the sun both the sphere and the cube, and make both shapes turn upon themselves, in such a way that they may fully rotate a few times. It is certain that the sides of both shapes whenever they face the sun will be lit, and the other sides will remain in darkness. It is also certain that no matter what side the sphere presents to the sun, it will only present itself in a single mode. Not true when considering the cube, which will on one occasion present a side and then an angle. Consequently, I should declare the body that presents to us invariable appearances of chiaroscuro, whatever these may be, to be the sphere. And, conversely, the one that presents variation, I shall say it is the cube."

Professor Sanderson saw two distinct and opposed worlds, the world of shadows and the world of light. That may be so. He was dealing with a problem that had been recently proposed, which as a matter of fact would not be resolved until the beginning of the 20th Century by Oliver Sacks, who by following the itinerary of a blind person who has his sight restored, determined that neither of the hypotheses presented by Locke and Berkeley were correct.[16] The blind person actually held a kaleidoscope-like vision, and, at first sight, what presented itself to this person was an indecipherable visual field. As if emerging from a moving mosaic, various visual options—now shadows, now light—would come before his virgin sight.

This is the vision we should try to attain, and it is this world that we ought to aspire to see. A world behind which there would remain our world, though perhaps only in a purely latent form; and a world which we can opt for, as we now know, at our fancy.

Mosaic, kaleidoscope, we shall return to these in the next chapters, though, to be sure, without ever having left the shadows. The shadows will follow us until the last lines of this manual that looks back at us. Manual, a book that gazes at us. Here we have the themes for the coming chapters.

[16] Oliver Sacks, *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

FASCINATION AND DETACHMENT

The dichotomy that I will be looking at in this chapter has its origin in a text by the philosopher and sociologist Norbert Elias, though the meaning I grant it is somewhat different. The German title of Elias' text reads *Engagement und Distanzierung*, the Spanish translation: *Compromiso y distanciación*, and finally the English edition (which I prefer), speaks of *Involvement and Detachment*.[17] Thus, to see oneself involved in a story, to find oneself compromised by, or committed to, let's say, a crime, and then to try to disentangle oneself from it but only to find oneself involved in it once more. A situation that we have all experienced at one time or another—though perhaps in a less dramatic manner—the entering and exiting of a story. For example, every Sunday we visit a couple, knowing and fearing that they will argue about the Gulf War, the excessive amount of salt in the soup, about a book they have both recently read or the dripping tap. Every Sunday they argue in our presence, and we have come to think, though we can't be sure, that without our being there, their arguing wouldn't take place. We are part of this; we are, perhaps, the essential element that unchains or sets off their reactions to each other. We see that we are involved, and when it all gets too much, we say to ourselves that we have had enough of all this shouting, and we take our leave, thanking them for lunch. Later, on the same day, now lying in bed before we fall asleep, suddenly, laughter overwhelms us, after all their argument was genuinely entertaining, we even compare it to last Sunday's fight and decide that we prefer this Sunday's.

Let us examine the situation in detail. We enter a context that is foreign to us, to which we are indifferent and which even annoys us, their arguing. We are involved in it, in many ways, we like the husband, a man of many qualities, and his wife, an exemplary woman. We have compiled a mental list of their many virtues and we lament their frequent arguments Later, as time passes, by, we starting asking ourselves: am I indispensable to their fights? Moreover, if it were so, what role do I play here? Arbiter, surely not, perhaps a passive witness or, and this is more disquieting, an active witness. An indispensable element to their quarrelling. Time goes by. The arguing now bores us. It will then become obnoxious. We no longer

[17] Norbert Elias, *Involvement and Detachment: Contributions to the Sociology of Knowledge* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

visit our friends. For some time now—it must be said—we had suspected that their clashes had become monotonous. Unconsciously at first, and then quite consciously, we had realised that the violence would start on the fourth bell ring of the Church across the street as it called for all to come to mass. Likewise, all the I'll-have-you-knows and the what-did-you-says would end precisely an hour later, as we sat at the table. At first it wasn't like this, the quarrelling could begin at any moment; it could end and start many times. There had been an unexpected element, and that instability had fascinated us for a long time. But with the passing of months and years, the arguing had become ritualised. So we came to a decision, on Sunday we didn't go. We took the decision to not go the following Sunday, or rather, it had already been decided, it was the decision that took hold of us. The second decision: "To never go back to that house", established itself slowly, as if by inertia.

Here we have the type of situation that will make it easier for us to appreciate an attitude that I believe is indispensable for the structuring of films. We shall speak, therefore, mainly about structure. I have called the chapter "Fascination and Detachment" for various reasons. When we enter a film we let ourselves be carried off, we let ourselves fall into it, we are in a state of fascination, we loose our capacity for analysis, the images surround us, envelop us, and the sensation of vertigo is predominant. There are those who believe that the best thing that can happen is for us to be fascinated by the film from beginning to end. Hence, they believe detachment is useless and boring. There is an expression that is widely used by film fabricators in Hollywood: "When you lose your spectator (that is, when you are no longer fascinating him), you lose him forever". According to this criterion, detachment is not only unnecessary but also dangerous. It's not what I think. I have a few reasons to believe that detachment is indispensable, and not only so that we may apprehend the film rationally—we already know that reason doesn't have a good name in the practice of art—but so as to experience the film's events in their full complexity. We mustn't forget that to experience a work of art is not simply the letting oneself be fascinated by it, a mere falling in love with it, but rather it's *understanding the process of falling in love*. For this one needs the freedom to move away from the loved object in order to return to it freely. The amorous encounter with the work of art is a practice that can be summarised in the following formula: "To love renders one intelligent", which certainly contradicts the formula which states that being in love is more like being hit on the head by a club.

Voi che per le occhi mi passaste 'l core
e destaste la mente che dormia

"You, who do breach mine eyes and touch the heart / And start the mind from her brief reveries", as Guido Cavalcanti would have it.[18] If we accept that

[18] Guido Cavalcanti, *Voi che per li occhi mi passaste 'l core*, 'Sonnet XIII' in *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti* (Translated by Ezra Pound, Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1912).

detachment is part of the process of falling in love intelligently with a work of art, we will come to see that this is not purely an intellectual operation, even if reason is a part of the amorous encounter between the spectator and the work. We must accept that this has little if anything to do with the detachment that Bertolt Brecht had in mind. For him the work's formal pathos required distancing in order to facilitate the shift towards (political) action. In the process that we are describing, the shift towards (political) action happens within the field that is opened and presented by the work of art itself. It's the work, not the spectator, that shifts towards action: the work extends itself and invades the world that surrounds the lover, and, in a few words, it colours him, it stains him. I have brought up fascination, I have my reasons. The word itself alludes to something that goes beyond its literal meaning. It alludes to a mental process that has been somewhat overlooked and disused, which has only recently been re-elaborated and resuscitated: the *evil eye*.

Let us see. There is a relatively recent notion that seems to have upset scientists, especially neurologists: the *external brain*. Given that I don't have a scientific training, I am not qualified to evaluate it. Yet I can play with it and use the notion to introduce two ludic ideas: the *explicit imaginary* and the *latent imaginary*. But let us return to the notion of the 'external brain'. In referring to the external brain we should think of the electromagnetic fields that surround our bodies, what in esotericism was once referred to as the 'aura'.

The ludic idea, or rather, the imaginal idea, consists in deciding that this area has its own form of activity, independent of the internal brain. To agree that it can leave the region that it inhabits, the body that generates it, and that it can go off on its own for a stroll, is to affirm that it can make itself visible or semi-visible. That is to say, it can go far away and attend scenes that are happening on the other side of the world, on the condition that the internal brain fall asleep previously. Attention, prudence! I have done no more than refer to a practice common to the indigenous peoples of South and North America, the Mapuche and the Yagane; common to the peasants of Korea, Siberia and Finland: shamanism. The shaman travels in dreams, flies off to distant territories, and enters homes through windows and chimneys. He attends scenes or events that he will later recall. On occasion, he will make himself visible over there. Sometimes he will enter the bodies of wild and newborn animals. Readers of Mircea Eliade,[19] Claude Lecouteux,[20] Régis Boyer[21] and Luc de Heusch[22] will know what I am talking about. Readers of Swedenborg

[19] Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism and Archaic Techniques of Ectasy* (Princeton University Press, 1964).

[20] Claude Lecouteux, *Witches, Werewolves, and Fairies: Shapeshifters and Astral Doubles in the Middle Ages* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2003)

[21] Régis Boyer, *Le monde du double: La magie chez les anciens Scandinaves* (Paris: Berg International, 1991).

[22] Luc de Heusch, *La transe: De la sorcellerie, de l'amour fou et de l'extase mystique* (Paris: Éd. Complexe, 2006).

will pretend that such events do happen. I have simply meant to say that shamanic travel allows us to illustrate a very curious form of detachment: the splitting or doubling of self. A complex operation of the imagination. A common practice undertaken by the film spectator who is open to the oneiric game that watching a film can be. It seems to be true that in any film sequence whatsoever, no matter how banal it may be, one will often find a character who will first appear in a close shot in scene A, and who will then immediately afterwards appear in a long shot. Is there some sort of general ban that forbids our seeing in this second shot, a double of the character we saw in the close shot? Thus every time we see the character in the film sequence (moments B, C, and D), we are really seeing the multiple doubles of the first character. And perhaps they are all but the imagined doubles of each spectator? These doubles, which Scandinavians refer to as *hamr*, are the splitting up of an original image (I am still imagining). This outpouring of ephemeral individualities is not a form of what we named towards the beginning of the chapter as 'detachment': leaving and approaching the face of the foreground. And to take the point further still, when the character sees an animal, might it not be appropriate to see it as his double? As his *phelgya* (to turn to the Vikings once more, *phelgya*: an animal's double). In addition, when we begin to feel intimately concerned with the fate of the multitude of characters that surround the protagonist, whom we love, and whom we fear for; have we not perhaps become it? Aren't we being taken over by the *hugr*, a Viking's third soul? In fact, the one that most resembles the notion of the personal soul at the heart of the Christian tradition.

Though let us return to the starting point. If a film's images, all of a film's given images, are but instances of doubling or splitting, that is, they are shamanic journeys mechanised by means of cinematography, perhaps then all we really have is detachment. Many forms of detachment, which fascinate us, each one with its own and different intensity. The detachment/fascination dichotomy must then disappear. Nevertheless, we still experience vertigo whenever we feel intimately involved in a succession of images, and enter contemplation when we are able to rest from the vortex. In this situation a different dichotomy, whose ground may be found in intensity, has replaced the previous dichotomy. We might want to say, following certain Chinese philosophers that we are *breathing in* the film. We allow it to enter our selves and then we allow it to emerge from our 'imaginal body'.

Before continuing let us say a few things as regards the 'intensities' I mentioned earlier, a notion proposed by Pierre Klossowski, who was following Nietzsche on this matter: One must accept, from the outset, if one wishes to play with this idea, that the intensity of an experience surpasses, coexists and overcomes the individual who experiences it. A thought that is not foreign to Aby Warburg's disquisitions on what he referred to as *Pathosformel*, representations of extreme states of being in which violence and ecstasy intervene. The representations are

themselves linked by means of an extreme tension, which allows them to come together in a manner that surpasses their mere representative nature (the photograph of a crime in Sicily; the representation of a state of abandonment in an erotic sculpture or in a religious painting). Klossowski, like Warburg, sees in this link that takes place beyond the figure's nature, an act that abolishes time. In a similar vein, though considering other issues, Rupert Sheldrake writes in regards to rituals:

"By means of the conscious realisation of ritualistic acts, performed in such a way that they may resemble as much as possible those that have previously been performed by others, the participants enter a 'cosmic resonance' with those who have performed the same ritual in the past. Time is shattered; it falls away. At that moment, all who have previously celebrated the ritual will inevitably be present, that is, there is a 'Transtemporal Ritual Community'."[23]

In our field, in the practice of cinema, this idea—which I find, let's say, pertinent, evident, or enlightening, as you wish—suggests the possibility of linking ideas, sequences and situations, which, though placed in different parts of the film, and despite what the distances between them may be (or rather, and I would be willing to say, the greater the distance the better), connect with each other, one reinvigorating the other. Not only because they participate in the same intensity, but also because they have the same 'sequence of durations'. Five or six shots, remind us of another five or six shots from another film and they feed each other by means of an effect that I call 'mirrors of duration'. It's not that these shots last the same amount of time. Rather, here we have two intensities, which I am tempted to call *states of fascination*, producing the effect of emotional detachment. Emotion that is truly never far-off from what Florensky had termed 'iconostasis'.[24] As icon amateurs know very well, iconostasis is the name given to a wall covered by icons in Christian Orthodox Churches. By extension it can refer to the mystical state (here we understand by mystical the sudden irruption of evidence) that results from the journey through the various images; the latter, in the case of cinema, would themselves be in constant movement, such that the whole would appear to us as if in a state of perpetual boiling, each image forming new links with the whole at each and every stage. This image-in-process will appear in this case as 'extreme detachment' and 'extreme fascination'. In such an image, all events, all *peripeteias* are abolished. The explicit order, the fiction that is being told and the implicit order—the subtotalities that are the potential fictions—finally come together in the same process.

However, we may have gone too far. Let us have a look at some of the concepts that the previous outline presupposes.

I remember how years ago in Iowa City, far off from the native land, whenever a Chilean friend and I would want to remember Chile, we would listen

[23] 'Dialogue between Matthew Fox and Rupert Sheldrake', *Resurgence Magazine*.

[24] Pavel Florensky, *Inverted Perspective and Iconostasis* (Translated by Donald Sheehan and Olga Andrejev. New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996).

to songs by Al Jolson, and we would accompany his recital with a German wine called *Liebfraumilch* ("Milk of the Beloved"). Moreover, while this ritual took place, we felt how different scenes from our past would come within our reach, exciting scenes of course, and these would themselves give way to new scenes. Each one of these intensities had little to do with the next, yet there was a duration, or a particular tenor that would draw forth their commonality. In my film *Le Domaine perdu* (2005), the protagonist finds himself in London at some stage of the 1944 bombings. There he speaks to a young woman whom he has approached to tell her about the disappearance of her father in aerial combat. Suddenly, she says:

- "I know that tonight we'll make love and that soon afterwards I will die, but I know we'll see each other again."

Amazed, the young man asks her:

- "We'll meet after our deaths?"

- "Of course not," she replies. "I don't believe in such things. We'll meet in a different way: you, or another man, will come across another woman, not me, like we have tonight, and they will live the same story, and, in this manner, we, like them, will have met."

Well, she seems to have explained it, but the whole thing happens in a specular manner and not only with similar situations but also with others that are quite different, but which by means of mirrors of duration reflect themselves and multiply.

In the pages to come I hope to attack this idea, which is rather more like a vision, from a different point of view, from a different perspective. I have left until the end what might be the clearest and easiest example to understand: the usage of approaching, fascination and detachment. In *Klimt* (2006) using a type of narration that we may refer to as 'fantasy' (the actual film is called *Klimt, a Viennese fantasy in the manner of Schnitzler*), I attempt to show that its episodes follow one another as if they tracked the wandering mind of some dying person. Technically, one might say, stories with *mobile narrative points* are being presented. The 'errancy' is fascinating, but every now and then, and in a rather regular fashion, the erratic element, the stroll, comes to a stop in order to reveal certain aspects of Viennese life and in order to show certain particularities of its social life. It is in this manner that racism, classicism, bureaucratisation, anti-Semitism, and a somewhat existential and suicidal melancholy take shape in the film. This process gives way to detachment. Fascination, on the other hand, results from the images that try to make us aware of our surroundings, as if someone like Klimt were looking at them, or perhaps imagining them.

*B*oth terms are frequently used, much too often, in film manuals. The first consequence is that their usage varies and different meanings are intended. Yet again, misunderstandings will inhabit some concept, sentencing it for being either tautological or contradictory, punishing it with the charge of vagueness. I will try as best I can to avoid such nebulous speculations, thus risking a few truisms along the way.

To begin, I will try to recast the concepts of *structure* and *construction* in an antagonistic relation to each other, rather than merely seeing them as complementary terms. 'Structure' will refer to an understanding of the film as completed, to its structuring form [*hechura*]: a series of foreseen tasks carried out according to a pre-established program. The structure was there prior to the film's having been made. 'Construction', on the other hand, will refer to the series of procedures and manoeuvres that lead us towards a completed film. Thus, the construction of a film is the execution of a foreseen structure. The structure of a building comprises its plan taken together with an aesthetic, religious, and practical or unifying concept. When deciding on structure we are making decisions as to whether in the final work it will be ornamentation, theatricality, or its functions: comfort, ease of access, agreeable volumes and shapes for its users, etc., that ought to predominate. In the case of film, we would be deciding on issues such as whether the film should be entertaining and light or sober and profound. The construction encompasses the film's building or the film *as it makes itself*: the accidents, the difficulties, the poorly thought out challenges that had already emerged in the construction plan; the mistakes one could not distinguish in the distance and which have now become substantial at the moment of execution. Let us use a distinction to which we shall return later: structure relates to the creation of the work, taken as a singular entity; while construction concerns the film in relation to the many circumstances that interact with it, throughout its making; during the many processes that will allow it to surface. That is, its relation with that which is near and far.

Up until now, everything seems clear: in the structure of a work there is foresight, in the construction there is a doing burdened with eventful changes, *peripeteias*.

However, things are never that clear.

Let us imagine a group of architects who are planing to build a Gothic Cathedral. In the work's implicit concept something is already privileged: the idea is to reach as high as possible. The construction begins. To achieve it there is a limited number of instruments. Soon afterwards, some technical difficulties emerge, which the available instruments can't solve. The work is brought to a standstill until the appropriate instrument can be found. However, as soon as the work is resumed the builders with the newly invented instrument come to see new problems that have not yet emerged, but which could present themselves later. The builders then *fabricate the problem* so that the new instrument may solve it. The structure of the work will now have to be modified in order to make way for the new problem *imagined* by the builders. The work continues, suddenly another problem emerges, which results from the problem that had previously been invented, and which surpasses the capabilities of the new instrument. The situation repeats itself; the newly invented instrument leads the builders to find a challenge that will itself bring new problems. At each stage, the structure suffers modifications. Suddenly, the dynamic of the construction resembles a tumour. The various chains of instruments, all generating novel problems and challenges, *temptations*, have led to a dynamic that is animated by a 'creative euphoria' in which the structural principles that guided the construction of the cathedral at the beginning, have either disappeared or have been lost along the way. Suddenly, structure and construction not only work as a dichotomy, but also as divergent dynamics.

In the third act of Calderón de la Barca's *La aurora en Copacabana* (1674), an Incan general who has recently converted to Christianity lays his weapons down and decides to dedicate himself to religious artisanal craft. He is then appointed to make the statue of the Virgin of Copacabana. He first tries to create the statue by imitating the Indian women that surround him. He is unsuccessful. In his first attempt the virgin has three eyes and two noses. In his second attempt, an eye, a nose, two mouths and four heads (I exaggerate, but it seems desirable). The more he tries, the less his creation resembles the human body. It seems as if everything he attempts to do is propelled by a non-figurative impulse. He is desperate when God—who is there for everyone—sends him a construction angel who explains in few yet precise words that the human body is not the starting point for the free creation of forms. The human body is not a port, even less so an airport. The human body is the *point of arrival*, an apotheosis, the culminating point. The Epiphany of Creation. The angel leaves, saying something like the following:

- "God made man in his image and likeness, when man copies the figure of man, he must not copy another figure but God."

- "But I don't see God, he is invisible," the Indian replies.

- "You are mistaken. God is present in each man; do not copy man but the image of God as it appears in man."

Further disquisition follows, but for us to continue would be catechism.

In the examples I have offered, there are two different types of relations between structure and construction. In both, creation or the activity of making, fabrication, has been rendered diabolical. The vertiginous demon of making who calls for aimless creation and invokes the joy of losing oneself in creative peripeteias is understood in a negative manner. However, it isn't always like this.

In the majority of cases, the relation between structure and construction resembles the relation between plan, program and its realisation or actualisation. In fact, in certain countries the director is often referred to as the 'realiser' (for example, French speaks of a *réalisateaur*). The one who puts a scenario into action, and who supervises the *incarnation* of a film previously only imagined *in abstracto*.

A formula that some production directors repeat with some affection states: "First, concept, then preparation, and finally, execution". To which a director with some experience might reply: "First, preparation, then execution, then back to preparation; execution, preparation, novel execution and finally the *concept*". To which I wish to add: "First, a provisional web of appetising images (which would like to render themselves visible, to embody certain landscapes and people); followed by written description and pre-execution, and then by intuitive execution, and correction of the structural plan, followed by a definitive execution in which shooting and editing are finally brought together." This process had first been put into effect towards the end of the 70s, due to the emergence of the first digital cameras and the various technical innovations at the time, such as virtual editing. What could this process of a recurrent coming and going mean? Well, firstly, that the film's prescribed shooting plan is not a rigid structure but something that is itself created, produced by a very particular practice of simulations. Simulating *in truth* means, to act as if the film had already been finished.

It's clear that one cannot always carry out the game of comings and goings that exists between structure and construction. The rules of fabrication in cinema have become even more rigid. I would venture to say that at the same rate as the new instruments have allowed for a greater elasticity in creation, the greater the number of arbitrarily imposed norms has become. But every now and then it seems that a process of interactions such as the one I described above is possible, at least within the process of experimentation. Along with good results. During the filming of *Vertigo of the Blank Page* (2003), I developed a story on the basis of a *never-ending* premise. The premise went like this: "The jury of a film festival is about to confer the grand prize on a film with the following premise: 'The jurors in a village are judging a group of terrorists who have captured a judge in order to

judge him' ". In the mornings we would develop the relevant theoretical ideas and in the afternoon we would shoot, at night we would see adjacent films that had a vague kinship with our film. An editing team would work at night, and at dawn I would write the dialogues. It sounds exhausting, but it wasn't. This was due to the satisfaction we gained from the interaction, the coming and going between the structure and construction of the film itself. It must be said that this way of working forces each participant, especially the actors, to see their work as a totality from within their field of action. And without us ever giving in to the temptation of discussing it. There was nothing to discuss. We exchanged not opinions but actions. A curious event occurred five days after filming had started, when I realised that a few secondary elements that I had considered primarily *ornamental*, were making themselves evermore present. After ten days had gone by, it had become evident that a new structure was emerging, breaking the initial premise without annulling it in its entirety. The insisting images revealed suitcases, exploding suitcases (why suitcases? I really wouldn't know) and phrases like "We're all dead!"—uttered by one of the screenwriters within the film quoting the film's dialogue. It had become weightier in this context. Instead of eliminating the disturbing elements, I sought to develop them, as if a parallel film, which had little to do with the first, were being born. As if there were a mother film and a newborn film. And so forth until we came to a critical point, the second film drawing closer, and soon afterwards completing itself by reaching its starting point.

We provisionally named this type of process a film with a 'double structure'. A film in which its second structure is born from the construction of the film based on its first structure.

The process we had followed intuitively resembled in many ways what theorists of the contemporary discipline of Systems Analysis have termed *feedback* (though the operations are not dissimilar, they are not exact equivalents). Nowadays I refer to this manner of playing with structure and construction as a *double mosaic model*. The reason is that for it to work efficiently one has to privilege fragmentation. The pieces of a puzzle that together form a predetermined figure, which given that the pieces have mixed with another puzzle—let's say, by virtue of an accident—now foster the emergence of figures foreign to the original puzzle. The success of this procedure depends on the ability to combine both puzzles in order to construct a third.

It's easy to say.

Let us see what we have obtained (what *I believe* it is we have obtained).

The first sequence (after having clearly announced the premise), takes place in a glass-walled room, where a group of jury members greet each other and present themselves before entering into deliberation. First, the introductions take place, then we come to the realisation that most of these people already know each

other, that they care for each other and that they detest each other. Before the titles, we have seen the members of the courtroom jury, that is, we are now seeing the film that the previous jury had been discussing. But both juries are filmed in a similar fashion, which allows for an amalgamation of both films to occur (i.e. between the film being discussed and the one we are watching). Throughout the development of the film we pass from one film to the other, until the film resembles a comedy of errors. Up till this point we've had a film about justice, about the act of judgment. A film *about*. And I seem to recall having mentioned that I find it hard to tolerate and, above all, to make *films about*... (We should remember that the first question that the average American viewer will pose when confronted by a film that perplexes him is: "What is this film about?"). Later, punctuating the scene, images of a film made by the judge's kidnappers appear on screen. That is to say, a film within the film within the film, as one might say regarding the *Commedia dell'arte*: *commedia in commedia in commedia in commedia*. The images, we suppose, are being seen by the members of the jury deliberating on the crime. *Mise-en-abyme*, one might call it, though I would rather view this putting into perspectives as a 'reframing' of the theme. A new game sets in. A web of ambiguous relations. Each member of the jury projecting his or her personal situation on the 'judged event'.

Well, such was the film. There was nothing else to do other than develop it and judge it. What had to be done was to show the film constructing itself according to the plan exposed in the premise. But then, all of a sudden, a few compelling statements could be heard within the dialogue. The screenwriter and member of the jury was saying: "Either way, we are all dead", and the other members of the jury would remain in silence. A death like silence. Then, images of abandoned suitcases on streets would appear repeatedly. And a voice that is typical of the documentary-form, would comment on images of whitewashed walls. The voice would refer to a "Sacred City".

In which film were we? What does this documentary have to do with anything? Gradually we were taken over by the paranoiac idea that some second film had slipped in, unintended, travelling like contraband within the first film (the one with a premise). In the soundtrack we could hear, with ever-greater frequency the noise of an engine (an aeroplane?). And during the discussions concerning the award (the award was a radio), one could hear a news bulletin (the broadcast of which reached us through the prize-radio); it spoke about a plane having crashed. The façade-film, meanwhile, would simply follow its course, but punctuated by these very disturbing signs. Disturbing because even if these images or signs were parasitic in nature, they had the particularity of being half-grasped by the actors in the façade-film. Just then a member of the film jury entered the room where the crime jury argued, that is, *he entered the film they were judging*. He spoke with a certain authority, explaining to them that in a few minutes they would board a plane

heading towards a film festival: the Festival of Samarkand. Samarkand? Death in Samarkand?

From then on we understood that all that we had hereto seen was but the mental imagery of passengers on a plane prior to its explosion, resulting from a terrorist attack. I have taken my time in reviewing this film because I believe it helps to illustrate the somewhat abstract idea of a double mosaic structure.

But let us return to the image of the mosaic, which will serve to illustrate what I suspect is a difficult idea to grasp, though one that is nonetheless useful insofar as we are concerned with reinvigorating the notion of 'structure', and its correlate, 'construction'.

In one of his interviews—and he has given many—Roger Penrose has tried to explain the manner in which he apprehends a new theory as it is explained to him by its theoretician. We should note, before continuing, that Penrose is a well-known English physicist. Thus he is often approached and presented with novel theories, not all of which can be fully apprehended on first exposition. Penrose says that he is in fact able to comprehend, because "he doesn't pay too much attention". While the theory is being expounded by its proponent, Penrose will gather loose ends, now and then, he will enter the theory, and then, once more, he will be distracted—as is often the case with certain theatre spectators, for instance, lovers of Claudel. In reality, we might say, he is isolating fragments floating within the theoretical field that the theory inhabits. This field is a model (a field plus the rules that govern it) and a system (a mobile schema linked to others). In effect, he is, as we might say, betting on the consistency of the theory without worrying about its coherence (consistency, that is to say, its elements are not contradictory; coherence: the theory does not contradict the general corpus of accepted and acceptable theories).

He goes on to say, and he is not alone, that almost all mathematical reflections are visual and couched in nonverbal conceptual terms (recall what has already been said in reference to Ulam's theory: "one thinks by linking a series of stenographic ideograms that traverse language orthogonally"). Penrose continues: when a colleague explains a theory to him, whom he has been listening to distractedly—though with a kind of distracted attentiveness that we may call 'intense detachment'—an intuitive image is suddenly formed, which 'represents' the idea that the colleague had been attempting to transmit by means of linguistic articulation. This image has been magnetised. Thus, concepts that have seemingly nothing to do with the mental image being formed through the exposition are drawn towards it. Let us forget Penrose's intuition and return to the mosaic or puzzle.

A puzzle, as is well-known, consists of pieces that show themselves as the fragments of an image taken as a *whole* (as a complete set: an already finished game?). Now, let us determine that these pieces are, in fact, in continuous

movement. It's not that each fragment passes from one image to another, rather, these fragments move within their limits as an endless film might, in which a filmed segment has its beginning attached to its end. Now, let us say that the final image reveals the face of a beautiful woman. It is only once we have seen the complete set that we can see the woman's face, though it's quivering. It becomes clear, when all the segments coincide, and unidentifiable when none of them match. Between these two extreme cases, we would find thousands of intermediary cases, in which the *final face* could only be half-guessed.

However.

If we continue observing the variations given in the face as a whole, every now and then, when the segments seem to reach their greatest moment of incoherence, a new image will surface: it's not a woman's face, it's a naval battle. After a while a state of fascination overwhelms us. The coming and going between naval battle and loved face (meanwhile we have fallen in love with this female-puzzle), provokes an agreeable vertigo, as a slow dance might. But let's continue with the game. At a given moment, our attention is taken over, above all, by the intermediary states. There, some sort of kaleidoscope of figures comes about, descending into amusing attractions in order to allow for the emergence of other images, which have our two images—the loved woman and the naval battle—as their 'resting points' or 'magnetic poles'.

It should be noted that this game is worthwhile inasmuch as it has allowed us to reach our first final image. But throughout the journey, what has happened? Each fragment is a genuine trap insofar as it will not refrain from movement. And phantom images, illegitimate images lose us (once more the *pareidolias-dilemmas*). Well, here we have the film I would like to make in the near future. The fragments move—this we already know, we're in the cinema. But they move from the previous to the following. We assume that this is indeed the only possible order. But, what if the film were shot in such a way that its fragments appeared to us simultaneously? What Penrose has said leads us to re-examine an underlying dichotomy in the game of exchanges between structure and construction. We ask, what are the relations between abstraction and distraction?

We have already seen that distraction can be an indirect form of paying attention and not merely a lack of concentration. We have all come up against, at some moment in our lives, some more often than others, the therapeutic gymnastics that would have us 'empty our mind'. Not an easy thing to do, it seems that as soon as we succeed in expelling an image or an opinion, another will quickly arrive to replace it. Journeys through time are frequent in a world made of distractions. The question I have already posed elsewhere: "Hamlet, did he or did he not have breakfast on the day? And if not, would that have been his distraction or Shakespeare's doing?" Distraction is often linked to forgetting, but there are

'forgettings' that are no more than involuntary secrets or memories in reverse. Similarly, when a lady comes up to me, telling me about her anxieties and circumstances, and this with a lavish amount of detail—and when it comes to lavishness, this woman really lives in luxury—the trip on the subway, the movements of the clouds, the newspaper headlines, etc., yet she forgets to mention the fact that that very same morning she had murdered her husband—perhaps because murder is not a luxury and nor does it pay—this woman is practicing a very peculiar type of distraction: one that would omit that which is truly important. Importance, Whitehead says, is important due to the irreversibility of facts.[25] Let us invert the proposition and say the following: all events without any importance are reversible: the dead husband can be resurrected. Hamlet's breakfast, as Schroendinger's cat, exists and doesn't exist. But in the world of abstraction things happen differently: abstraction omits that which disturbs its vision of the whole. Abstraction summarises the processes *from within*, from the interior. For her, the process had come to an end. Distraction omits in an erratic manner.

To return to our starting point: abstraction gives us structure; distraction offers us construction. It should not be thought that we are speaking of a subject that is far too abstract. All screenwriters know of the experience of having to omit loves, crimes or tempests at sea, "so as to not distract the viewer". All this is done in order to avoid upsetting the structure of the film. In the sea of emerging and floating events, there is, however, wreckage, flotsam. Flotsam is a boat that will not sink. It's *on the edge of the sea*, at times the waves may cover it completely, and then again, they reveal it as if it were actually floating. Flotsam, now viewed as a theoretical object, may prove itself to be useful in understanding an idea or procedure: the events that are not even part of abstraction (they are not part of what is essential in the completed work of art); nor are they present in distraction, they have already been forgotten in the to-ing and fro-ing of peripeteias. Yet they are there, glimpsed. And dangerous: the flotsam that has caused shipwrecks is innumerable (and here I am also speaking literally). I think that in flotsam—as a rhetorical figure, to be sure—we find the intuitive image that can insistently account for the totality of an organism ('organism equals film'). I do say this prudently. We shall see later that the totality of a film is always provisional. A film, even at that moment when the words "The End" appear is not truly complete. It is, if anything, a subtotality, a provisional whole.

I would now like to refer to yet another dichotomy, one that was commonly used in the 1920s by the philosopher and mathematician Jacques Hadamard, later appearing in his book *The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field*.[26] In the dichotomy *cogitare/intelegere*—according to Hadamard—the etymology of each term is able to express the meaning of each

[25] Aldred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1938).

[26] Jacques Hadamard, *The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field* (Princeton University Press, [1945] 1996).

operation: to agitate, to shake, that's *cogitare*; to select certain elements after having shaken or agitated them, that's *intelegere*. If we now look closely, we should come to see that in applying this dichotomy, that is, in *superimposing* it over the structure/construction or abstraction/distraction dichotomies, we are, to a certain degree, inverting the initial dichotomy. We have, up till now, assumed that structure must come beforehand and that construction must inevitably follow. Likewise, that abstraction would come first and that distraction is but an accident, a flaw, a journey.

With the *cogitare/intelegere* dichotomy the opposite is really the case. It's the execution that allows for some manner of intellection to take place. Various distracting paths—strolls down different routes that do not lead us anywhere—will allow us to have an intuitive grasp, though totalising, of the field over which we have walked. This may be the right moment to re-examine Penrose's idea of a 'distracted apprehension': thought is not an immobile terrain. Neither is a film. The apprehension of its totality must run through an operation that Hadamard names 'thinking sideways'. Obliquely.

A few days ago, together with some friends, we played with the following idea-situation: if we accept that what Hitler really wanted was to take possession of Vienna, then it would have been enough for him to stroll through the city's streets, walk every now and then into one of the cafés, observe the people, breath in the contradictory odours that escaped from the city's chimneys. However, it seems that it was indispensable for him to be accompanied by an army and that he be worshipped by the dumbstruck masses. When we enter a film, we would like somehow to appropriate it ourselves, we wish to invade it, we would like for it to adhere to our expectations. The simile I have used is not lacking in all good sense or reason as it might seem initially. And it will prove itself to be useful as we come back for the last time to the structure/construction dichotomy (and its various derivations).

The following dichotomy is virtually the same as the one we have been considering up until this moment. Though its manner of operating, of intervening, comes to us, once more, from Pavel Florensky. We find it among his notes from the 1920s, taken during his course in the Moscow School of Experimental Art, that Soviet Bauhaus: *construction/composition*. Construction, what reality would like from the work of art. Composition, what the artist would like from the work of art.

In a work of art, there are, either in convergence or caught in conflict, two volitional organisms struggling to be seen. But to let themselves be seen they are forced to coexist.

Many banalities may result from this dichotomy, one may distinguish, for example, between an objective work—insofar as it is the structure that predominates, the latter becoming an analysis and an expression of the outside world—or a subjective work—privileging the mental landscape resulting from the elaboration and transformation of the *news* that reaches us from the outside world.

But we're talking about cinema.

Cinema, by definition, captures the outside world from a given angle. It may multiply the angles, accentuate subtle differences; though no more than that really—contrary to what the proponents of digital cinema may say. Theoretically speaking, cinema privileges structure, given that the work is formed on the basis of fragments that have come from *outside*. Cinema may compose as realist painters do, but it cannot 'invert the perspective' as do the makers of icons. I say "it cannot", but let's be clear, everything can be achieved thanks to the treatment of images, through electronic design, but in all attempts to build mental landscapes, the starting point will always be external.

Unless…

Unless there is confusion, amalgamation or intense interaction between what is inside and what is outside.

Georg von Békésy, almost half a century ago, undertook various experiments, producing vibrations as a response to stimuli on knees and other parts of the human body, concluding that in some cases, the body could sense foreign bodies that were located outside the body itself, and that it could detect their movements.[27] These experiments were among the first that would give way to formulations regarding the holistic cerebrum. I am not about to offer transcendental revelations, though I may confess to certain misgivings based on personal experiences. For example, the extension of a film's images towards my body, such that aspects of the image may become palpable. Here I am not talking solely about the effects that certain erotic images may have on a normally (or abnormally) constituted spectator's organism; rather, other images, more banal ones. Having the impression of touching a serviette or a wall. Or a fruit, and then, perhaps, smelling it. I am referring to the extending of images or sounds into tactile or olfactory sensations. I am taking about the tendency to complete certain sequences when seen in specific conditions (slow montage, sequences that drag out, for example). The outside world that has been filmed and recreates itself. The mummy that returns to life. The wooden post that forms part of the fence, coming back to life, blossoming and producing fruit. The facts are here, and they have been reported (except the mummy, which is really but a saying): a man whose amputated leg still hurts would be a common and accepted case; numerous hypotheses have been offered to explain it. But a man who has a tickle in his third knee and whose supplementary molars hurt, lead us to think that there may be a virgin jungle of forms exterior to the body. We will return to these cases in a later chapter, 'The Face of the Sea', but what I would like to highlight now is that when we talk about: "a work of art created according to the wishes of the outside world"; such a statement is not as transparent as it may seem at first.

[27] Georg von Békésy, Hungarian-born physiologist who discovered how sound is apprehended and communicated in the cochlea. In 1961 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine and physiology.

On the other hand, the outside world would rather be *as it is* in the work of art. 'It would like to be', that is, it is a world *as will*. Jaakko Hintikka has written about a world that 'half wills', there we find external forms that seem to be winking at us.[28] Husserl's famous *noemata*, images that are becoming recognisable, which Hintikka curiously refers to as models for 'realist' painting. He offers as examples several of Picasso's paintings, and certain abstract paintings. What should we think? That these realist paintings are somehow the consequence of a crash between the artist's composing will and the to-be-composed nature; or, perhaps between, a de-composing artist who wishes to impose his intuition (Croce) and nature that perseveres in being itself.

And what about ghosts?

Ghosts, the favourite subject of children's films, have much to offer as regards these speculations. So do mirrors, though we will return to these later. Sheridan Le Fanu, the Irish novelist, erudite in phantasmology, maintains—in a digression in his novel *Uncle Silas*—that ghosts are "either seen or heard", but never both.[29] A ghost that can be seen and can be heard is not a ghost, but a sibling, a neighbour or an intruder. Or a character in a film, even if all its actors are dead, or *The Burial of Count Orgaz* by El Greco, which portrays a group of ghosts burying a ghost. And music, isn't it but philosophy for ghosts?

Though let us return to ghosts according to Le Fanu, and develop the implications for film. Imagine a film in which ghosts are not entities, characters that scare the dead or who in turn are scared by them. Let us imagine, then, let us decide that ghosts *are* a function. A film that *phantasmagorises* itself in waves. Suppose that the film takes place in London.

Phil Wright, professor of Kinotherapy (that is, healing or therapy through cinema), is returning home. At the bus station he finds his colleague and detractor Harold Byrd, the inventor of Phototherapy, whose basic thesis is that 'cinema is a poison', and its correlate 'photography is a massage' that is good for your body and soul. As enemies that respect each other, they treat one another cordially and, every now and then, they allow a sign of true friendship to surface. They talk about the weather and the last human bomb with indifference and discretion. Before Phil Wright's bus arrives, Harold Byrd takes leave and decides to head home by foot. For reasons unknown to us, a great silence has taken over the street—and perhaps all of London—such that Phil Wright is able to distinctly notice that Harold Byrd's shoes don't make any noise whatsoever as he walks down the footpath. Phil's surprise and our surprise. As soon as Harold has disappeared from our view, the bus arrives and Phil gets on, sitting on the second floor. He lets the dusky scenery go by. It's the violet hour.[30] Suddenly, he hears a voice that calls to him:

[28] Jaakko Hintikka, 'Is Truth Ineffable?' in *Lingua Universalis vs. Calculus Ratiocinator: An Ultimate Presupposition of Twentieth-Century Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, [1985] 1997).
[29] Sheridan Le Fanu, *Uncle Silas* (London: Penguin Books, [1864] 2000).
[31] T. S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land' in *Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, [1922] 1940).

- "Hey, I hadn't noticed you, how are things?"

Surprised, Phil looks around him. The bus is half-empty. Three Pakistanis dozing, a Chinese man reading the newspaper. An elderly woman knits and talks to herself. But it's not her.

- "It's a beautiful sunset," says the voice.

This time Phil recognises the voice. But he still can't see the speaker.

- "Oh, Harold! I hadn't seen you!"

And he is still unable to see him.

- "I had thought that you had decided to walk home."

- "I changed my mind," says the voice.

Phil still can't see anybody.

But the voice continues speaking. A Pakistani turns around in his seat, looks at them. Many people get into the bus, it's full, and the seat that speaks remains empty.

Phil and Harold chat for some time.

- "This is where I get off," says Phil, "goodbye". He gets off the bus.

The bus leaves and we stay with Phil. He walks down a deserted street. It's almost dark. He walks past the camera and crosses the street. There is enough time for us to notice that his steps can't be heard. He can be seen, but he can't be heard.

He enters his house and now we can hear his steps. He walks up the stairs.

- "Is anybody home?" he asks.

We see a woman coming from the kitchen, Edith, his wife.

- "Hello," he says, "have you had a good day?"

She answers but we don't hear her. But, apparently Phil can hear her, as he smiles and replies:

- "I am happy to hear it, I have also had a good day."

Then, we hear her say:

- "Phil, I have something to tell you. Let's sit down."

Phil speaks, we can see his lips move, but we can't hear what he is saying.

- "I want a divorce," says Edith.

Once more Phil replies and yet again we can't hear him.

- "Well, it's your right," he says. "Could we have a drink to say goodbye? We've had some very pleasant moments, I'm grateful."

- "Thank you, you're so gentle," she says.

- "Am I right," he asks, "have you fallen in love with someone else?"

- "Yes," she says, "with him."

She points towards a corner in the room where for us there is no one.

- "Well, that's good!" says Phil, "Harold, I hadn't seen you. I thought you were walking home."

- "I changed my mind," says Harold.

- "Well, cheers!" says Edith.

All three drink from invisible whisky glasses.

Edith walks towards the window, looks outside, and is unable to contain a scream of horror.

- "My God, it's what I feared!"

- "What's wrong?" Phil asks, approaching the window.

- "Look," says Edith.

We notice at the same time as does Phil that they are no longer in London but in Rome.

- "I hold nothing against Rome; but this ghostly city in which we live, changes all the time. Two hours ago we were in Casablanca, and this morning we were in Caracas."

- "I understand," says Phil. "But it's no reason to change husbands."

All three cheer and they sing in chorus a Scottish song.

As they sing they disappear into the air.

The End.

But this is not the pastiche of a surrealist film from the first vanguard. Instead what we have here is a film in which *ghostliness* circulates, as understood by Le Fanu.

Now let's go over it in various ways.

Structure and construction: where do we find structure and where do we find construction in the scenes that we have just described? It seems evident to me that in the function of *ghostliness* we find structure. It is a principle. For some time, indeed for years, one referred to function as a 'device' or *dispositif*. The *dispositif* was a structural prejudice that would state: in the closed world that the artwork will be, here are the rules that will govern its creation, the impositions that we shall have to obey. Nothing new: the sonnet respects the hendecasyllable verse (or another form of syllabic arrangement) and the A-B-B-A structure in its first two strophes, followed by the C-D-E-E-D-C in all six remaining verses, or, equally the C-D-C-D-C-D structure. All artistic practices have rules that will limit them. The reason for the existence of these rules may be found in the complex game of attraction/repulsion that is symmetry. The why remains a mystery.

In our present case, *ghostliness* is the presupposition that the characters and events in the film be traversed by the rule: "That which can be seen cannot be heard, and that which can be heard cannot be seen", together with the occasional transgression, which lightens, renders seductive and fascinating the limitation itself.

Fascination, because when we limit on one side, we expand on the other. Here, one expands, one potentiates, because when one sets limits, some form of magic will allow the world that we have revealed to become strange and integrate us. Let's recall a case that OuLiPo knew well: writing texts without using a particular vowel. The curious oeuvre collected by Isidro de Robles, *Varios prodigios de amor* ('Various Prodigies of Love'), consisting of five short novellas in Spanish with no author's name, each one prescinding from a vowel, published in 1665 and reprinted in 1760, presents five stories. The first one is entitled *Los dos soles de Toledo* ('The Two Suns of Toledo'), its opening line reads: "Over the eminent site, its sublime reverie or delicious throne; wherein fully surrounding the bold circle of pompous hills…" ["Sobre eminente sitio, sublime sueño y delicioso trono, en torno y círculo vistoso de soberbios lisonjeros montes…"]. We immediately come to see that the letter 'a' is remarkably present given its remarkable absence; *its absence shines*. I say it 'shines' and that's true, given that as soon as the story begins it tends towards two poles: the syntactical meandering to which the story is forced to take recourse given the absence of the letter 'a'; and the absent letter, which has perhaps never before been as present in the reader's mind as it is now that it is sorely missed. Two facts affect us: the many and winding paths that the absence of the letter will force the author to take, and the letter 'a' itself, evermore present, shining in the distance like the sun. Yet it is a rigid limitation: to avoid the letter 'a' becomes the responsibility of the constructor and the law that would proscribe the letter 'a' is the only and terrible law that the structure imposes.

In cinema this type of dichotomy does not abound, yet in certain films some form of censure will often play the role of the implicit structure. Consider Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn* (1949), there the explicit prohibition not to show lasting kisses directs the maker to the idea of multiplying the short kisses, thus potentiating them. We have spoken of various dichotomies, some can be superimposed on others and some replace them.

Allow me to recall the notion of 'mobile and/or interchangeable schemas' in order to make clearer the review of oppositions and complementarities that we have embarked upon. The notion reaches us through Max Scheler's essay 'The Forms of Knowledge and Culture'.[31] There he distinguishes between the accumulation of concepts and facts that integrate with a single immovable schema—hoping to grasp what is an irreducible problem in terms of a single schema—and facts and concepts that potentially integrate with many different schemas. Knowing how to make use of various permanently moving schemas allows us to construct some kind of intellectual hologram for a complex phenomenon, which is itself in constant movement. A metaphorical corpus of concepts that presents itself, at first

[31] Max Scheler, 'The Forms of Knowledge and Culture' in *Philosophical Perspectives* (Translated by Oscar Haac. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958).

sight, as being reticent to penetration. That will only tolerate its being overflown. That condemns us to having a satellite's point of view. If that's so, then let's use numerous satellites and a few probes. And we shall have a spectral portrait of such an elusive phenomenon as cinema.

For the attentive or inattentive reader, in our case, overflying or penetrating are almost the same thing; and the 'structure/construction' dichotomy may seem weak, rambling and simplistic. I would like that one see in it the two poles proper to planet cinema, orbiting around other planets, these are also called cinema. Our art, doing, reflecting and the multiple resulting heuristics—heuristics, in the double sense of the word, as both 'mirror of the creative process' and as 'theatre of the theatre of the world'—that which the ancient dramatists of the *Commedia dell'arte*, who limiting themselves to enouncing the structure and leaving the construction to the actors, referred to as *commedia in commedia in commedia in commedia*.

Such is cinema: it fabricates Big Bangs at every instant.

Some of the themes that I will try to recall, to reawaken, are announced in the reflections of the preceding chapter concerning structure and construction. Problems that, as we shall see, will be superimposed on those that have already been presented—an indispensable operation in a book such as this one, wishing to be holistic and self-referential.

We ought to begin with the silence of ghosts: 'what can be seen cannot be heard'. I am referring to phantom cinema: silent film. For a long time film theorists reflected on its muteness. They affirmed without any fear of equivocation that "what is proper to film is its muteness, its silence". Koulechov quotes a few: "An art lacking the vice of words", says one, "The Grand Silence", proclaims another. But another, a rather more perspicacious observer, dared to say that "Film was the noisiest spectacle he had ever known'. Noisy, in what way?

Let's see. I endured my first feasts of silent cinema—four to six hours in one go—a touch later in life, at the age of twenty. The first thing that I noticed was that the noises coming from the street, the shouting of people in the nearby offices and the coughing of some spectator, were immediately assimilated by the film. The cough would head directly to a door that was being shut, a woman's scream in the distance would support the act of lighting a spy's cigarette (in a Fritz Lang film), the dog's barking would mark the shift from one take to another and/or the winking of a mischievous child. As regards those indeterminate noises, these would install themselves comfortably and would suggest an, at times, unsettling off-screen: the noise coming from the streets of Santiago de Chile would become the off-screen for a placid island or for the Sahara desert, suggesting that the placid island or the Sahara desert were in fact near a noisy city. Yet sometimes, silence, true silence, sonorous obscurity, would come down on the theatre, overwhelming us. This must be one of the most moving experiences I have ever had with cinema. Dissolved images, swallowed images, becoming abstract due to the simple and overwhelming experience of silence. It was due to experiences such as these that I came to realise that there were different types of silence. From the outset, two at least: the uniform silence behind the undulating noises of the street and the silence that emerges here and there between noises. Many silences. Many shadows.

During the first years of my encroaching deafness, I discovered a curious form of destabilising my surrounding world. I would exchange a few banal phrases with someone, I would then leave, taking a few steps, suddenly realising that I had forgotten to say something, I would return, but the person had already disappeared. After many similar experiences, my perception of immediate space was modified. It decomposed into separate visual planes. As is known, deafness is not always constant, it comes and goes, occasionally separated by a whistling sound. One is walking in a room, suddenly one turns around, seeing someone that one hadn't heard enter the room. We turn our back on him (we don't know him), and as we turn around again, we notice someone else whom we hadn't seen, who is talking to us, yet again, someone whom we hadn't heard enter the room. Little by little, we get the impression that in each new and peaceful back and forth, there are slips of time. Or place.

We are suffering a modification in the perception of our surroundings, or vicinity, which will inevitably modify the resonance of ensuing events.

'Vicinity' is not a notion that requires many explanations.[32] We all know that certain things are closer and others farther. Yet, in cinema, vicinity becomes a fragile notion. There are things that exist as long as we see them, and cease to exist as soon as we stop looking at them. Like those that are irrelevant to the sequence that we are following; we should understand the sequence as a series of events, linked by a narrative thread: things that follow each other according to the order that has been proposed by the narration. And there are irrelevant elements. Faded, vague.

The irrelevant props: a half-torn propaganda poster in the blind alley in which the delinquent being chased by the police has just entered. These things disappear as soon as we stop looking at them, but we can still follow the chased delinquent in the expression of a boy who watches from a second floor.

But what happens to those things that disappear once we cease seeing them? We forget them, impatient thinkers may say. They dwell in the unconscious, awaiting better days, psychologists might say. They form the film behind the film, says the mischievous spectator. In any case, I believe that we see it all, that we don't forget any of it; those events or things that seem to disappear when the camera has abandoned them, are merely provisionally outside, they do not *insist*, but they are there.

Unless…

There are two fictions that speculate upon the idea of vicinity, which is itself closely linked to the 'absence/presence' dichotomy. Do we remember Whitehead's joke? A present elephant is distinguishable from an absent elephant insofar as the present elephant 'makes itself noticed'. Of the two fictions that I wish to present, the first one comes from the television series *The Twilight Zone*, the other is a nightmare I had many years ago.

[32] Ruíz avails himself of the Spanish term *vecindad*. One should read in its English rendering, 'vicinity', the idea of a shared and defining neighbourhood rather than simple physical proximity –TN.

The first fiction would have us believe that the part of the world on which we turn our backs would disappear if it weren't for the little blue men, who are there rebuilding it, so that it may be 'there'—visible and 'freshly made'—when we turn around and look at it again. Without the little men, the world that we are no longer looking at would disappear indefinitely. We may find an extreme variant of this very same phenomenon in an example taken from quantum physics: the electron will behave as a particle as long as we are looking at it, but as soon as we look elsewhere, it takes offence, and becomes a wave (I am grateful to Michael Talbot's *The Holographic Universe*, for this *reductio ad absurdum* of Bohr's terror-instilling hypothesis.[33]). The other fiction, my nightmare, consisted of a series of pleasing conversations with the Invisible Man.

When I met him in my dreams, he introduced himself—and lowering his eyes as a sign of modesty—he said: "I am the Invisible Man". I asked, why, if he was indeed the Invisible Man, could I see him? His reply was that everyone could see him, but that as soon as someone looked elsewhere, turning their back on him, he disappeared. He was then capable of walking through walls, drifting through to other worlds. He was a real misanthrope, and told me that unfortunately his condition did not allow him to attend halls or large events where many people gathered. Given that there were always too many people, there would always be somebody looking at him, thus preventing him from becoming invisible.

- "Other than drifting or travelling, I also use invisibility for sustenance. I take nourishment from waves and absences," he said, blushing, for he knew himself to be a poet and was a modest man.

- "I would love to be invisible," I said, "I have always disliked the idea of having to go through doors or windows. I would rather leave through walls!"

The Invisible Man who had, as indeed I do, a culture that blends immortal monuments and scoria, said to me:

- "We have all, at some time or another, had the temptation to follow Prisciliano de Avila who believed that natural laws were sinful, and who sought to rebel against them by walking into walls so as to denigrate doors."

- "That's true," I replied, "I have always dreamed about being invisible, but invisible like you."

- "There's nothing to it," he said. "All you have to do is use the techniques of fascination, which others have referred to as the 'evil eye'. Look straight at me and wish me the worst. I shall do the same."

- "Will it work?"

- "Professor Sheldrake believes that it will. And he's not the only one. The eye being but an extension of the brain, mediates between the external mind

[33] Michael Talbot, *The Holographic Universe* (London: Harper Collins, 1996).

and the imprisoned mind. The interior mind is composed of particles that govern our bodies and the external mind is a hologram of the former. It will suffice to charge with negative intentions the bridge built by the mutual evil eye, such that the hologram that we carry around ourselves since birth, interns itself back into our bodies, rendering it impalpable."

- "Impalpable, but visible," I said, starting to understand the dangers inherent to the experiment.

- "That is correct."

- "And my quantic body?"

- "*Finito, kaput.*"

- "Must I die?"

- "You are going to die regardless."

- "But a slow death."

- "In order to come back to life as the Invisible Man, or, if you prefer, the Holographic Man. People will see you, but they won't be able to touch you."

- "Will I have a will? Will I be able to go wherever I like?"

- "In a manner of speaking. You will be able to traverse walls."

- "Could I escape from prison?"

- "Yes, but I can't guarantee that you will be coming out on to the streets of this world."

- "And what world would I come out into?"

- "That's for God to know (or his holographic double)."

- "I see, thanks. No, I don't want to be invisible."

- "It's your loss," he said, yawning.

And in the deep blackness that his open mouth revealed I could see the stars.

In the fictions that we have sketched above, one plays with the ideas of vicinity and resonance. Vicinity, because we are dealing with events and things that are 'within the hand's reach'. One 'puts into crisis', as analytical philosophers say, the idea of vicinity, as that which is nearby can, at the same time, be far away. The logical consequence being that we may say to ourselves in an unperturbed tone: "wherever it is that we may be, we never know where we are".

Let's now look at the extreme case of over-localisation that is cinema. A film is a single work of art made out of the multiple subtotalities that are the shots with which it is composed. Like any organism, it coheres not solely on the basis of the relations that exist between the whole and the part—bordering on the vicious circle: a shot depends on the whole film for it to exist, and the whole film-organism depends on each and every one of its parts. Is what we have just said really true? Withdrawing a shot from a film, would that destroy it?

In 1920, Lev Koulechov discussed this problem in relation to an experiment proposed by the filmmaker V. R. Gardine, who—availing himself of many films on the same subject—found it necessary to make a unique film on the basis of the many unfulfilled individualities that each film proposed. The problem somehow relates to the issue of organ transplants among living human beings. Living, as each film has its own circulatory system, and comparable because these films are part of the same genre. They are comparable in the same way that a giraffe is just like another giraffe. At the beginning, the enterprise looks like an effort to interconnect a corpus of giraffes in series in such a way that they should form a *giraffic* monster.

But the truth is that, although the films being used are of the same type, they are less 'giraffic' than it had first seemed. As in grafts, there are phenomena of rejection and attraction. Likewise there are other types of phenomena. Superpositions, multiple interconnections, monstrosities. Above all, there are delocalisations. Let's compare this experience with the example that Bohm has given us: the case of what is now commonly referred to as 'Bohm's Fish', which could well be as famous as 'Schroedinger's Cat'.[34] We are watching two television screens, each one showing a fish in an aquarium. At first sight, each fish is moving independently of the other. Were we to look closely we would notice that there are coincidences among the movements of each fish; prompting us to think about two concepts: resonance, for each fish will at times resemble the other, perhaps, the echo of the other; and vicinity, because they seem to imitate each other. Little by little we come to think that the fish are next to one another and mimic each other. The idea that their proximity leads them to observe and imitate each other imposes itself upon us. Then someone invites us to come up to the second floor, there, in a small studio, we discover that two different cameras are filming a single and unique fish. Resonance and vicinity have now vanished as problems.

It's not the problem that first arises when a film composed of many independent films is unified. But if we come to see that, amid vicinities and resonances, films joined by force are presented as if they were a single film; we see that they, in fact, exemplify the opposite case to that of Bohm's Fish. Nevertheless, both cases touch on the notions of resonance and vicinity.

The idea of vicinity among works of art is unsettling insofar as it questions the individuality, the uniqueness of the work. Stating that a work of art is unique and unrepeatable has become a regular claim of Western *doxa*. 'Attributionism'—the decision by experts concerning the paternity of a painting or a poem[35]—as an intellectual operation, has for a long time been indispensable to the history of the different arts. The notion of the author, having economic

[34] An experiment described by John P. Briggs and F. David Peat in *Looking Glass Universe* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984).

[35] Giovanni Morelli, *Della Pittura italiana: Studii storico-critici di Giovanni Morelli* (Ed. Jaynie Anderson. Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, [1890] 1991).

consequences, has had much to do with the setting in and later institutionalisation of this relatively recent form of fetishism: "Here we have an authentic Rubens or Rembrandt", is a headline that we often read in newspapers all over the Western world. It wasn't always like this. It must be said that in cinema, the notion of author has been confined to only a few countries. Very few indeed are the filmmakers who are conferred the title of 'author'. To be sure, expressions of the sort "belonging to such and such school..." or "of this or that period" are commonly used, yet, as far as I know, the notion of vicinity has been employed little in analysing, valuing or understanding works of art. And, least of all, cinema.

In painting, only a few Chinese artists such as Shi Tao have used the notion of vicinity as a path for creation. The importance of this idea, I believe, has been little appreciated. Shi Tao's opinion is that painting functions in relation to various other modes of creation—which I have already mentioned in the *Poetics of Cinema 1*—one of which he terms 'continuity in other paintings'. A filmmaker may translate this idea by saying that a film's *off-space* is composed of other films of the same type, same style, same *élan*, same fabrication, by the community of themes, the similar logics of production, same actors, and so forth. I would also add, the same shared memories and same manner of remembering, the same *schema*, as Ernst H. Gombrich would put it.

Evidently, discussing this theme is risky, especially insofar as the idea may seem a vague and dim commonplace, lacking conceptual vigour. Yet I would like to place emphasis on the strangeness hidden within the following commonplace: "This detective film resembles others". What have we just said? It resembles another, certainly, but it is there as its 'neighbour'. It's in the vicinity, detective films resemble each other. Always a detective, always a crime, always a femme fatale, a cabaret, a piano and a criminal bullet. Yet what would you say if I affirmed that this resemblance renders them different? And not because one film may be better than the other, but rather, because what allows for their resemblance, 'ritualises' them and renders their likeness sacred. And as with all rituals, though we are well aware that these same liturgical gestures and events have been repeated many times before us, when we come to enact them, we are intensely *here*. It is a 'here' reinforced by the innumerable *over-theres*. It is a *resonating* vicinity.

Imagine a city, and then imagine a suburb within it. Each house has been made by the same architect. The houses are all identical, but the people that inhabit them are obviously different. Now, let's imagine that for some reason, for example, due to an epidemic of collective amnesia, the inhabitants start to repeatedly mistake their houses. Soon the moment comes when finding your own house is the exception and not the rule.

After some time (which we could refer to as a 'period'), there is a gradual return to the point of departure. Each person will now begin to frequent what in

other days he may have known as 'his own house'. A house, which they had bought—a house just like all the others, granted—though still the house that they had chosen at the outset of the game. The owners haven't realised yet—but we have known for some time—that some form of joy (*jouissance*) propels them to take the game further, exceeding what the calculation of probabilities would allow. The misunderstanding, or play, is referred to by some as the 'Game of the Erroneous House'. Gradually an unconscious dialogue is established, that is, an involuntary dialogue among the owners, whereby inertia and surprise allow the game to progress. Neighbour A, for example, is keen on ashtrays, and every time he enters a neighbour's house, knowing that the following day it will be another house he visits, decides to take with him an ashtray as memento. By the end of the first cycle, everyone has returned to their starting houses, and each has picked up souvenirs from other identical houses. One neighbour possesses a considerable quantity of ashtrays, another has gathered a number of dolls, and let's not forget the aficionado of love letters and unpaid light bills. The house, let's call it the *primitive house*, has undergone a slight change due to the various objects that make 'vicinities' resonate. But then the game recommences. Once more, everyone is mistaking their houses. The game is not always fun. The fact that one knows that one will—or that one *wants* to—return to a different home everyday, is distressing the whole neighbourhood. Their nomadic immobility has gradually caused in them a feeling of unreality, of not belonging anywhere. A new societal evil has been born, quickly baptised as the 'Erroneous House Syndrome' (EHS). The first transgressions against the tacit game will now take place. One morning A, pretending to have a cold, will stay in bed. In the evening B, coming home after work and wanting to go to bed, will find the bed occupied by A, apologising, he will leave and go to another neighbour's house. He will have to walk down the street, and go through various houses, until he finally finds an empty bed. The next morning, while having breakfast, he is surrounded by strangers. Sick of the game, he returns to his bed, pretending to have a cold. Erroneous House Syndrome has now, for the first time, become patently clear. The fake cold infects all the neighbours one by one. After some time, everyone is keeping to their bed. There are only ten nomads scouring the streets in the afternoons, they go from house to house, looking for a bed.

We may change the virtual cold caused by the Erroneous House Syndrome for a set of films that resemble each other. In other words, for 'films of the same kind'. And putting to one side the natural tendency films have to be the same film right to the 'The End', we may imagine that these films enjoy mixing with other neighbourly films. The experiment can be done. Our finding will be (I have already done this mentally) that the inevitable indifference caused by the events and dangers that each protagonist is subject to in each film, gradually ceases to interest us. It's to be expected, in film 'A' we had keenly followed Robert Ryan's exploits, a bank robber being chased by the police. Now, all of a sudden, we find him running

down the same street, though this time as the detective, chasing after Richard Conte, a hired assassin. The next scene will picture Robert Ryan drinking in a lonely cabaret, chatting with Richard Conte, the barman, we see him finishing his glass and walking up to Doris Byrd, the femme fatale, whom he asks out on to the dance floor. As soon as they embrace, we realise that it's not Ryan, but Conte whom she is dancing with. We will have the same joyful vertigo with the sets and the stories: the same cabaret sheltering different crimes, the same paperboy crossing the same street, shouting out different crimes.

Vicinity and resonance come together to intensify a cinematic emotion that we find it hard to name. A harmonisation of the varied? Harmony or counterpoint? A curious effect of simultaneity and immobile multiplicities attracts us, though differently to the way in which a film with a main story but with no vicinity would; a film that doesn't remind us of anything.

We may examine a more banal case. We have all seen in DVD stores, text on the back of cases that reads: "Director's Cut". Such a phrase is meant to legitimise a certain version, a certain cut, and to render illegitimate another. Or others. Within the film industry, there are always various versions. One uses the expressions: first cut, production cut, second, third; the buyers demand cuts that accord with their network's programming guidelines. Which is the true version? Or, if one prefers, which one is the good one? All of them. None.

I answer: a film, one that we shall never watch, consisting of resonances and vicinities.

In each version that we watch, there lives, there vegetates, another film that we won't see. And if we could see the other, then the first version would be by its side as its neighbour, though a terribly noisy neighbour. In film, more so than in other arts, *coexistence* and *co-insistence*—synonyms for vicinity and resonance—make themselves noticeable such that they determine a reflective and speculative off-screen. That is to say, when we watch a film, any film, we haven't seen it completely. Unless someone were to miraculously order all the scenes. Yet, would that be the complete film? It's not clear, given that the script on which the film is based has also been remade and refashioned.

In his *Miscellanea* Zapata tells us that in Michelangelo's epoch, there was no lack of people who despised him. They would say: "It's not bad, but you really couldn't compare it with the works of the Classical period". One day on the outskirts of Rome a statue that bewildered all was unearthed. An extraordinary Jupiter, carrying such menacing force that whoever saw it would cross himself and take a few steps back. The Pope came to contemplate the prodigy, and said: "Here is the proof that in Antiquity there were great artists. This proves that we live in an epoch of decadence". Michelangelo examined the statue and confessed his admiration, saying: "This statue is comparable to one that I made myself". This was

scandalous, scornful. He was accused of being arrogant. Michelangelo heard the insults and without losing his calm he replied: "I have just quoted what Phidias remarked when he was shown a statue, the exact replica of this one that you now have before you. In those days people already spoke of the decadence of Athens. In fact, Phidias had buried his work so that people would believe that it had been made in earlier times, during the Golden Age of Antiquity. I have now done the same. This statue is no better or worse than mine. Following Phidias, I made this statue and then had it buried. Many others in times to come will do the same. Perhaps in a different way. The works will pass. The ceremony will be repeated". All remained silent. The Pope left enraged, and Michelangelo said: "The ceremonious fraud that you have all been a party to, was not the first, nor will it be the last. The history of art is made on the basis of repetitions, and it will continue to be so." Centuries have passed. Nearing the end of the 19th Century, a Belgian Agathopede (all the members of this sect were) affirmed that he had discovered what was left of the remainders of Michelangelo's *Moses*.[36] It is known that Michelangelo, who said many things, did say the following: "To create a statue I simply remove the pieces of excess marble found in the block". The Agathopede pretended that the discarded fragments of the Moses had remained intact near Rome. He exhibited them in Brussels to great acclaim. The show consisted of two parts. In the first, three artisans surrounded the recomposed rock and would, before the audience, proceed to bring down each fragment, one by one, until the platform where it had lay was left completely empty, barely lit by a zenith-like light. Then, all those present, could see, just for an instant, amid all the smoke, the figure of Michelangelo's Moses. The vision would last for no more than a few seconds, the applause would break out, and as if in a stupor the audience would shout, from astonishment and fear.

What these young tricksters were doing was simply recreating Michelangelo's hoax ('Phidias' ploy' had also been Michelangelo's fabrication). Following Robertson's techniques—another Belgian—the Agathopedes were projecting an image of the statue on the smoke. To achieve this they were using a magic torch. The fragments were false, no more than bits of white rock. But then another practical joker (since the invention of Belgium, itself another prank, farce has become a foundational art), without letting himself be seen, substituted the image of the Moses for an image of Boticelli's *The Birth of the Venus*. The trick was applauded and repeated. An early form of what would later become cinema had just been invented.

Let's return to film.

In a private screening, a film from the great era of silent cinema is shown. All those who are present agree that "in those days, people knew how to make cinema". At that moment a young man, who is about twenty years of age, appears

[36] The Agathopedes were a group of spoilt children who would spend lengthy periods of time imagining jokes of great erudition.

and declares: "I made this film together with some friends". A row breaks out. Someone intervenes, an elder historian:

- "I saw this film in 1930."

- "It's not the same, there's a resemblance," says the young man.

- "No," says the historian, "this is the film that I saw, but it's missing four scenes."

- "Mine is also lacking four scenes, but they're not the same ones."

- "All films lack something or other," says a critic.

- "And all films have too much of something or other," says another.

- "Let's add what's missing and take out what's redundant", concludes the director.

They do this, still something is missing, still something is superfluous.

The End.

But what is it that is both there and not there? I can answer: "it's resonance". My alter ego says: "it's vicinity". We are both right. Beyond attributionism, there will always remain something outside a film, which will continue to resonate within what we do see. And something that struggles to come out. The latter is inevitable, but I think that it's an indispensable part of the film's visible corpus. It's the 'next film, the *Moses*' fragments. It's *The Eye of God*: a ceremonious imperfection.[37] The incompleteness that renders the work breathable.

The conjectures regarding what is missing or what is superfluous can be taken further. We may admit that what a film is missing, has itself parts in excess, and that what a film has in excess also has lacks and absences. We could enter an uncertain process, though knowing that there is a *limit*. The game works insofar as we limit ourselves to images that have actually been filmed. Beyond that limit the game would enter the world of conjecture. The film that 'could have been', consisting of scenes that were scratched before they had even been shot; or scenes that come to one's mind years after the film has been finished. I believe that playing with this sort of virtuality can be stimulating. We can be lead to that world of unmade films, dwelling ceaselessly in our mental landscapes, between sleep and wakefulness. Films at a wake, as one might say thinking of ghosts. Half made. Unmaking and remaking themselves without end.

There are two cases or at least two verifiable cases.

The first comes about whenever we choose to 'invert' the reverse shots. As is well known, a film consists of a series of important dialogue scenes that are filmed using a technique referred to as 'shot/reverse shot'. In these cases we are presented with two characters that are made to face one another. One speaks, the

[37] Cristina Campo, 'La flûte et le tapis' in *Gli imperdonabili* (Published posthumously. Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, [1987] 1999).

other listens, and vice versa. We know the scene has been filmed at least from two different angles. Now, let's try to picture the film as if mounted back to front. We know the images exist. This operation is verifiable. Let's try to see each take from the 'exact reverse angle'. Each take. That is to say, the landscape, the long shots, the scenes on the streets. Some form of total reverse shot that corresponds to the film that we are watching. It is a stimulating exercise that leads us towards a unique *swarming* vision of the film. Real and imaginary images tickling each other.

Another more complex case would concern those films that are being born and are dying within the very same images that we are seeing. When I say that by watching a film with numerous shots we are really watching as many films as there are shots in the film, I am referring to the following mental operation: trying to visualise the film traversing the one that we are now watching in the space of the shot. The orthogonal film that we can visualise, as if by shorthand. Once more, a difficult, though stimulating exercise; even if somewhat eccentric. Because someone could say that we already see plenty of images, just with the films that are imposed on us. Here I have tried to play by exercising this extravagant practice, in the sense in which one might speak of 'extravagant saints' (those that one wouldn't find in the calendar). It must be said: this film of which we are only capable of seeing a single take is, in fact, an 'extra'; the supplement that wanders through the imaginary world of each spectator.

As can be seen, by writing about vicinities and resonances, I have wanted, above all, to speculate about that 'active aura' that surrounds a film as we watch it.

A stimulating exercise if we continue believing that the film we are viewing is *unique*.

E. M. Foster, quoted by Mario Praz in his *Mnemosyne*, says: "A work of art is a 'unique product'. But why? Not for the fact that it might be ingenious, noble, beautiful, enlightened, original, sincere, idealistic, useful or instructive: any of these qualities may be present in it, but the work of art can be distinguished above all for being the only material object in the universe capable of possessing internal harmony. All other objects have had their form imposed upon them from the exterior, and upon removing this mould they would simply fall apart".[38] Yet given what cinema is, can we think of it as a work of art?

I think we can't.

And Mario Praz believes that, like cinema, works of art are explained equally by their context, their vicinity and their resonance.

[38] Mario Praz, *Mnemosyne: The Parallel Between Literature and the Visual Arts* (Oxford University Press, 1970).

In Alonso de Villegas' *Flos Sanctorum* (Toledo, 1578), one reads the succinct narration of the life and martyrdom of three Saint Gineses. The first, a comedian and martyr, martyred in Arles, we have come to know through the play by Lope de Vega, *Lo fingido verdadero* ('The Feigned Comes True', 1608); we know his date of birth (25 August), though we don't know who condemned him nor the year of his death. We know that the second Saint Ginés died in the days of Diocletian (303 AD), but we don't know where nor when he was martyred. The third we know nothing about. The first and the second were comedians who made a living making other people laugh. And in those days there was little material as laughable as Christianity. Surio tells us that God imposed faith on the first Saint Ginés—through an interposed miracle—during the presentation of an anti-Christian comedic play. Receiving faith amid laughter, he became a Christian. Upon hearing of this, Emperor Diocletian had him tortured so that he would abjure faith in Christ. As the torture only unleashed more laughter, the Emperor had him beheaded. Saint Ginés lost his head amid laughter, his own and that of the Romans. He lived and died accompanied by laughter. He may now be laughing in Heaven. It is said of the second, who most concerns us, that his conversion was either accidental or the product of a misunderstanding. He was a truly great professional who loved his vocation, believing that lying—expressing false emotions as if they were true—was a divine action, loved by the gods and despised by those who believe in a single deity. It is said that when he was preparing himself to play a character, he would impregnate himself with the false substance that constituted it to such a degree, that when the spectacle finished he would find it hard to detach himself from the illusion he had incarnated. He would come back home with his character, they would share their lives, or rather, to be more precise, he devoted himself to it by *losing his life* for months, long after the show had finished and been forgotten by everyone. On one occasion he played the role of a Christian believer, playing him with such intensity and with such attention to detail (it would not have been too difficult, his parents were Christians themselves) that he continued being a Christian for months, long after the show had ended and had been forgotten by all. But not by Diocletian. This curious conversion had not been the result of any form of divine intervention. In the days of Louis XIV the case of Saint Ginés

provoked a scandal and did much to promote the standing of actors in France.[39] Representing or playing false emotions as if they were true was deemed intolerable and worthy of punishment.

Spain's Christians saw things differently. There is no such thing as a false emotion, whoever says that he loves you, or hates you, is obliged to care for you given that any spoken declaration or promise creates rights (if not, why would the figure of Don Juan, assuring all women of his eternal and unique love, be the cause of so much fear and the object of such hate among Iberians?). What is represented *is*, and what is not represented is not, states an old Spanish adage from the Baroque. What the camera does not see cannot exist, says a cinematographic adage.

To simulate is to lie. Yet if dissimulation is also a manner of representing, it is then a form of truth. The worst actors are the best, affirm in unison Luis Buñuel and Thomas Bernhard. "Everything that an actor does is interesting", adds Jacques Rivette; which is akin to saying that all human beings are actors for the simple fact of being present before cameras. Where do we find the truth?

Neither in one nor in the other, but in all that is contrary, as might say the Mexican comedian Cantinflas, and, perhaps, a mathematician schooled in non-Boolean algebras. There is an anecdote well known to all Anglo-Saxon theatre students: an American actor, a keen fan of introspective techniques asks an English actor (they say that this actor existed and that his name was Laurence Olivier):

- "What can I do to find my character? Where do I look for him?"

- "Don't look for him, play him," replied the English actor.

I don't mean to denigrate one or the other. To construct a character the way that one might build a house or a dam has its charm and wonder. We find this in the second Saint Ginés. Applying the rhetorical techniques of saying and doing with the utmost clarity, has, indeed, many advantages, and if there is any wonder in this, there will no doubt be as much 'satisfaction gained from a job well done'. Once again we find some of this in the second Saint Ginés.

The first Saint Ginés is somewhat more curious; there is a miracle, God intervened directly. Lying by acting can be dangerous; the lie can end up becoming true. "To say the truth simulating a lie", "I say I am sick so as not to become sick", states a Byzantine proverb; and "The lie is a figure of truth", as William Blake has told us. Some taboos of popular behaviour can offer us other variants on the same theme: "To pretend to be crippled in front of a cripple, will make you a cripple"; "By raising your hand before your father, you'll either lose it or it will wither". Lying will always have consequences. And the nature of the *serio ludere* that is cinema itself is linked to the act of simulation and lying.

[39] Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, vol. 1: Prolegomena* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

Many filmmakers have offered me variations on the following superstition: one tells me that having made a film in which the couple ends up committing suicide after having an affair, he then met a woman with whom he lived the same emotional curve, yet this time he was able to avoid the fatal dénouement because he "had already filmed it" (that is to say: 'he had previously lived it as simulacrum'). Another tells me that he discovered a family secret "after filming it as fiction". And Giovanni Papini who converted to Christianity while writing a sceptical biography of Christ.

Many years ago, in the faraway city of Santiago de Chile, a few friends and I were recounting our pacts with the devil (in the double sense of the word, both enumerating and narrating them; we were essaying a brief anthology). We were well over twenty by the time the themes were repeating themselves: youth, treasure, a bridge towards the future, the unattainable and impossible woman whom one loved, a few atypical cases such as the one who wished for the devil to kill the odious and healthy dictator. Suddenly someone said, in passing and with no emphasis, as if not really wanting to recount his story:

- "Well, once, I *was* the devil."

- "What? How? When?"

- "For a while, a couple of months back, I was the devil."

He then proceeded to tell a story about taxi drivers, yet another genre of urban folklore.

- "I was in a taxi, it must have been about five o'clock or so. Suddenly I heard myself telling the driver: 'Hey, here's a pump, you can pull over and fill the tank. It's almost empty.' He replied:

- "How do you know? The gauge doesn't work."

I came out by saying:

- "I know many things."

The friend telling the story paused.

- "Recent research suggests that the majority of taxi drivers who begin work around eight in the morning will refill at about five in the evening."

He continued his story.

- "We stopped at the gas station, and while he was filling the tank, I bought two cans of Coca-Cola, I handed one to the Taxi driver, saying: 'Here, your favourite drink.' "

- "How did you know it was my favourite?"

- "I know many things."

Another parenthesis:

- "According to the latest research, over 90% of chauffeurs when asked, will state Coca-Cola as their favourite drink."

He continued:

- "I got in the taxi and we left. A little while later the driver said: 'well, if you know that many things, then, tell me, how many children do I have?' "

- "Three, two with your wife, and one outside of wedlock," I replied.

Another pause.

- "According to researchers from the National Institute for Demographic Studies, the majority of taxi drivers have three offspring, two of which are legitimate, the third being illegitimate."

He continued his story.

- "We were about to reach my place, when I said: 'At the corner, turn left. There you'll see a policeman kissing a young woman wearing a blue apron. There, you'll turn right."

Once more, a parenthesis:

- "It was my maid who at five o'clock sees her boyfriend, a policeman. The chauffeur was getting more and more nervous."

He continued his story:

- "At the corner turn right and stop where there's a house which has the entrance light on."

Looking at us, he said:

- "The entrance light switch at my house hasn't worked for about two months."

- "The driver then abruptly asked: 'Have you come looking for someone?' "

- "Yes."

- "Who are you?"

The narrator paused. In a very low voice he said:

- "I felt a shiver down my spine, and I think even my voice changed."

He continued:

- "I am the one that you've been waiting for."

- "And the person you are looking for is..."

- "Someone whose time is up."

- "Tell me, do you know next week's winning lottery numbers?"

- "Of course."

- "Can you give them to me?"

- "Give? No. But you know the price."

- "Alright."

Silence, once more. Then, the narrator said:

- "I gave him the numbers."

- "Were they the ones?" we exclaimed.

He paused once more.

- "I don't know. I never checked."

- "And what about the taxi driver?"

- "He died. I saw his photograph in the newspaper. Accident. After a party, celebrating something or other."

- "Celebrating what?"

- "He had won."

- "Won?"

- "I don't know, I am assuming."

From the story I have just retold, hold on to the cold shiver.

Possession?

Probably.

I would very much like to film the shiver. The moment the narrator, or let's say, the actor, becomes momentarily the Devil. The *daemon*, the mediator.

In his essay, *The Trance*, Luc de Heusch explains the important role theatricality plays within ceremonies of possession.[40] Which theatricality? I believe that in this case we are dealing with a combination of trickery and artifice, or if one prefers, enchantment and solemnity. Heusch develops an idea that I find pertinent, finding it in that particular form of theatre that is the presentation in brief segments of a long theatrical work, subjected to a continuity wherein the fragments are given as a whole.

Each segment, in the long run, will incorporate itself into the whole that is the film. Yet possessing, let's say, a credibility that is proper to it. The truth of acting is not the same in each take, and, I suggest, it's better that it be like this; as each segment, taken separately, puts the character into perspective in its own way, a character who thus *unfolds* in front of us. Unfolding and withdrawing. A game that is not lacking a touch of eroticism. Some might say: "It's nothing but eroticism".

Marcello Mastroianni would often ask me, throughout the making of the only film we ever worked on together, *Three Lives and Only One Death* (1996):

- "In the next scene, should I act or am I a wardrobe?"

A pendular attitude: passing from intensity to mere presence. Both attitudes presuppose the vicinity of the other, even if the other is only a camera. Between these two poles, there are, I suspect, many intermediate situations.

[40] Luc de Heusch, *La transe: De la sorcellerie, de l'amour fou et de l'extase mystique* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2006).

Though let us return to perspectives. In a curious essay written by Del Solar and Reyes, *Teoría de las perspectivas* (*The Theory of Perspectives*, Santiago de Chile, 1956), it is argued with much irony and rigour, that "there is no world, there are only perspectives of the world". It would be hard for us to accept this if we were arguing about cosmology, though a much easier task if we are talking about cinema. In cinema, literally, there are nothing but perspectives. Perspectives and continuity. We have already seen this, the effect of continuity results from the mere vicinity of a film's fragments, the one being placed next to the other. But there is yet another continuity, which is the product of the stories that we are unfolding and redeploying through the different takes. And which is, above all, produced by the actors whom these stories are about.

The idea that tickles me is that continuity may well result from a second-degree perspective: the general attitude when confronted with filmed material that is subject to a single point of view.

A single point of view?

I have the impression that this thing is rather more complicated. It is true that having a coherent attitude in relation to the material being used in a film is both necessary and desirable. We may refer to this as the *principle of mise en scène* or *personal style*. Though it's evident that in the accumulation of perspectives, there coexist second-degree perspectives resembling Max Scheler's mobile schemas.

There is a scene in *Klimt* in which the protagonist is having breakfast with his mother and sister. The sister, who at this moment is clearly hysterical, asks whether it is a mere coincidence that Klimt has children with his Jewish models. Racism. We immediately find the sister disagreeable; the social paradigm that condemns anti-Semitism is operating. The mother intervenes (each intervention rendering both sister and mother more unlikeable). She will say with the same odious tone: "Poor children!" And Klimt replies, "Mother, the models are free." The mother answers sarcastically, "Free, yes, evidently free." Suddenly, the mother's reaction has escaped the game's logic, 'anti-Semitic family versus free-spirited Klimt'; simply because the mother is right. Whoever enters the film with a minimal knowledge of life in late 19th Century Vienna should know that these models were subject to the whims of their employers. They were not free, they could not choose, rather, the *droit du seigneur* was tolerated, well-looked upon, and seen as an 'amusing thing'.

What is it that has just happened in the scene, which up until this moment had been thought of as a closed continuity? Evidently, with no premonition, there has been a rupture. The rupture is not located in the tone of voice, nor in the manner of filming, nor is it in the music. The rupture has come about by inertia.

Let's look at another example.

In a bar in Santiago, an elderly client is chatting with his friend, saying:

- "For all these young people, we are already dead!"

To which his friend retorts:

- "Tell me, Don Luis, when did you first realise that you were dead?"

- "Oh, well! A long time ago!"

It's clear that the word 'dead' in the first case refers to his being outmoded. In the latter, it refers to his being dead, in the proper sense of the word. The scene, at the beginning a playlet, has now moved into the realm of fantasy fiction. From *Las de Caín* by the Alvarez Quintero brothers to Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*.[41] A change in narrative perspective brought about by a phrase said in passing or by a word that passes from the proper to the figurative sense. A change of perspective *within the continuum*.

But let's return to the idea of segmented acting, of 'take by take' acting. Many actors are constantly asking: "In what part of the film does this scene happen? Before what? After what?" On rare occasions will the director's or the script's answers satisfy them. I don't know of anyone who has dared to answer: "In this take there is no real before or after. It's an isolated scene". Nevertheless, there is evidence to the contrary: each scene is isolated from the other by the words 'action' and 'cut'.

Suppose that in a film, for reasons that it will not be worth our while pursuing here, the working plan requires that the scenes be filmed as disorderly as possible. An actor will be asked to read an arbitrary dialogue, say:

- "And I who thought that I had been led here to celebrate my birthday, now I see that you are prepared to kill me. But it doesn't matter; I will know how to die as a Roman. Show your daggers. Here is my chest!"

Following this dialogue, another one that reads:

- "Today shall be the happiest day of my life!"

Later:

- "This cold will make it impossible for me to attend the Emperor's coronation!"

And later still:

- "Pomponius, accompany me to the baths and you shall be free for *manumitio inter amicus*. Later you will lend me 200 sesterces, *ad ostentationem*."

And in the last scene, he should say:

- "These three little doves are *res nullius* as they lack the *animus* to return to the dovecote. We will casserole them and use for seasoning Lucullus' *garum*."

[41] Serafín and Joaquín Alvarez Quintero, *Las de Caín* in *Comedias escogidas*, Vol. III (Madrid: Biblioteca Renacimiento, 1910); Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo* (New York: Grove Press, [1955] 1994).

The actor hasn't had the time to read through the script (it happens rather more often than people imagine), but the dialogues he is memorising as the make-up is applied, give him an idea of the kind of character he must embody. It must be said that the film is entitled *Julius Caesar*.

The five dialogues that he must read are filmed using close-ups. There is no one in front of him. The actor is not having one of his best days. He succumbs to boredom. He has recourse to his imagination so as not to reveal in the image his desire to yawn. Alone before the camera, he closes his eyes and asks his daemon to summon him.

- "Macarena, call me," he says in a high voice, shutting his eyes.

And Macarena calls him. She whispers into his ear:

- "That woman you see before you does not love you. She is hurting you with the dagger of indifference. And you who were overjoyed upon seeing her! Here she is, the woman that kills you. Here, your Lola Daggers! But what do you care! The stabbing will be your delight! A balm for your lovesickness. Ask her to hurt you, demand that she kill you! That would be your greatest birthday gift!"

The actor offers his dialogue as if it were a madman's love confession. The following scene will now take place. The actor first summons his melancholy *daemon*.

- "Saturnine, guide me!"

Saturnine comes to him, smelling of sulphur she approaches him, holds his hand and speaks to him:

- "That which you have most feared has happened. Your family, exterminated, your newborn child, sacrificed, dead and devoured. All your slaves, massacred. Your mother hangs from a tree, and the ravens that will devour her body are coming!"

The actor can feel the tears welling up in his eyes, he then speaks:

- "Today shall be the happiest day of my life!"

For the next scene, the *daemon* Diotima says to him:

- "'Cold' means 'joy', 'coronation' means 'conversion', and the emperor is Christ the King. You refuse conversion to Christianity."

And the actor surrenders himself.

Later Demeterine and Fatima will come.

- "The three little doves are *The Three Morillas of Jaen*, to cook is to love, *garum* is the dove's neck."[42]

And Fatima:

[42] *Las tres morillas de Jaen*, an allusion to a traditional 15th Century Spanish song, known to us through Federico García Lorca's arrangement.

- "'Pomponius' is captive Germany, '*manumitio inter amicus*' is a settled peace, and the '200 sesterces *ad ostentationem*' are the *pax romana*."

The five She-Devils, as we have just seen, have put forward readings that are contrary to what the texts suggest or, perhaps, they have offered allegorical readings. But each suggests and imposes different fictions. Each dialogue and each actor's close shot inhabit a different narrative field. These are not necessarily contradictory but divergent and, to be sure, they may at times even be complementary. To summon demons, to seek possession, or trances. Most actors know about rubbing shoulders with vertigo and turmoil. Each dialogue is assisted and fulfilled by its own demon. Each one consumes the actor's mind differently.

There's a term that Luc de Heusch uses frequently: *adorcism*. 'Negotiated' diabolical possession: one calls the demon and instead of exorcising it, or kicking it out, one politely shows it the front door, thanking it for its various services. I would now like to briefly pause in order to better articulate two processes: 'fragmented acting' and 'plural possession'.

The witty Jean Cocteau came up with a gag for one of his works that would end up becoming—as was often the case with his *brainwaves*—the starting point for an acting technique in cinema. Let's name the procedures 'errant possession' or 'flying demon method'. In Cocteau's work a demon possesses one by one all the characters and enjoys itself by having them lose their external mask.[43] Each actor will lose, if only for an instant, its *gimmick*; perspicacious observers will notice the changes and the situation, the rest will most likely consider the actor's fleeting possession a momentary distraction. Gradually, we reach the moment when intrigue and narration fall apart due to the accumulation of disturbances, discrepancies and outbursts. The action's fluidity will overflow, whirlpools will abound (yes, once more, the 'river' metaphor may be applied to the development of a character as *continuum*).

We have dared to propound a hypothesis, affirming that "there is no contradiction between an actor's fragmentary work (which amounts to inventing a story for each take, another story for each scene and each sequence, and—if the film has three acts—then another for each act) and the general coherence of the character". The actor might ask, what do I gain by fragmenting my character? I am not sure that I can offer a satisfactory or even clear answer; but, intuitively, I believe that in a character's evolution along the path of the filmed work, we may create a unique character, consisting of *particular egocentricities*, that is to say, of provisional individuations, which would foster the emergence of numerous and fugitive 'what ifs'. It's as if a character could detach his nose from his personality's well-structured shell, setting it loose, letting it go for a wander, and then have it return. The result

[43] Jean Cocteau, 'The Knights of the Round Table' in *The Infernal Machine and Other Plays* (New York: New Directions, [1937] 1964).

may be the greater appreciation of imaginary peripeteia. A greater equilibrium (though I am tempted to say 'disequilibrium') among the avatars of 'emotional memory' and 'imaginal memory'.

Much has been written about the quarrel or bifurcation of paths for which Mikhail Chekhov is ultimately responsible: on the one hand, emotional memory and, on the other, the actor's imagination. I assume it is understood and I shall not rehearse it here. In my view, there is no contradiction between either approach. Stanislavski's path privileges the elaboration of character as a complete event; the other understands it as a crackling of imaginal events. Imaginal rather than imaginary, as it operates with various hypotheses, with *what-ifs* that are not fulfilled, but which are nevertheless realised around a central character whom we follow throughout the film.

I will now attempt to transpose an idea that has come to us from the world of Art Criticism: Ernst Gombrich's *schema*—which is itself a transposition of Thomas Kuhn's idea of a *paradigm*. The paradigm in science and the schema in the arts serve to designate the opinions and spontaneous attitudes relating to a scientific fact or an artistic event. Unconscious attitudes—that is, semiautomatic (David Peat names them 'active stock', and, at times, 'intellect' which in this case are meant to stand in opposition to intelligence; in other words, *ready-made* ideas). Simply put, the schema is made up of the instantaneous reactions relative to a painting. These presuppose a corpus of opinions, reflections and ways of seeing. According to Gombrich, and his followers—I don't count myself among the latter—these reactions change with time as new attitudes emerge. I have the impression that rather than substituting, these are superimposed on already existing attitudes. If this isn't the case, then why are the analyses of the play of volumes and perspective in Cézanne still valid? Whoever speaks in terms of volumes, perspectives and geometry in general is really using concepts pertaining to the paradigm-schema of the Renaissance. Impressionism does not negate perspective, rather it emphasises something different, the capture of the instant. It has been said that Impressionism privileges a perception of the world as vortex, as fluidity.

But let's return to my transposition.

Since Stanislavski, character has been constructed as a clock. A Newtonian clock. Later on, within and outside "the method", the character will cease to be a clock. It's liquefied; evolution, duration, the flow of emotions and its overflowing are privileged. Though Stanislavski's counsel is still valuable and useful. In Stanislavski—and here we return to fragmentations—there is a coexistence of mechanical criteria and vitalist attitudes, privileging impulsion, lows and highs, and the dramatisation of incoherences.

Normally, the vitalist actor will enrich the constructed character by charging it with accidents, lacks, emotional crises, indeed, even hysteria. I propose

that we redirect the compulsive emotions towards the imaginal fragments, towards the unsettled stories that are outlined in each take. Without doubt, this is not meant to exclude the emotions corresponding to the central fiction. The emotions Mastroianni alluded to when he asked: "In the next scene, should I act or am I wardrobe?"

Up until now we have spoken primarily about human presence, and, above all, we have referred to the actor as a solitary individual who seeks contact with other solitudes. Up until this moment the actor has been thought of as an island. But these islands are connected. There is commerce between them. There is peace or war. I would now like to dedicate a few lines to these connections.

I must admit that in my works, I have tended to privilege the connections among actors over the construction of individualities. For this reason I distinguish between *acting actors* and *acted actors*. The acting actor takes the initiative, the acted actor receives the influence and will either react or not to it. Provisionally, there are two, though often there are more. To simplify matters, let's say there are two poles and a mediator. But their roles are mobile.

To speak of an acting actor is not to abuse language. Let's look at the simple (and extreme) case of 'facial empathy'. We have all met someone who suffers this agreeable malady. These are people who when facing someone whose words come effortlessly and torrentially, whose gesticulations are prodigious and whose hand movements are generous, will soon enough begin mimicking their gestures. Such passive and belated gesticulation bifurcates into gestures that echo the active gesticulator and gestures that are its commentary. The empathetic suffers the invasion of the acting actor. Some form of scuffle or dance takes place, at times tending towards conflict, at times tending towards some form of parsimonious tickling. It would be a mistake to consider the passive actor—the acted actor—as somehow being less important than the active actor. Especially if there is solecism in their connection. That is to say, if the words mean one thing and the gesticulatory flux another. Let's recall that solecism—a figure of rhetoric that refers to some form of syntactical contradiction, which Quintillian judged as equally applicable to painting and which I consider pertinent to cinema and acting—may be of great importance in the back-and-forth of fascination and detachment (yes, *involvement* and *detachment* are just as relevant to acting in cinema). The clearest example of solecism that I can put forward is the well-known image of 'Uncle Sam' that we have seen in bellicose propaganda posters. In this war effort poster Uncle Sam is pointing toward the spectator with his index finger, saying: "I need you!", but an anti-Sam artist has replaced the index finger with a revolver.

Let's return to the acting performer and the acted performer. In the domination game that I am describing, facial and gesticulatory empathy goes from one actor to the other, and the process encompasses what has been termed

'interaction' or 'implicit discourse'. What the actors say to each other we name explicit discourse and what they merely suggest or insinuate, what remains unsaid, we name implicit discourse. We often say one thing for another.

A young woman says to her suitor:

- "I am sure you hate me."

And it's now clearer than ever that she is asking him to be clearer in his advances.

If her wooer isn't quick on the uptake, he will reply:

- "Of course not, I don't hate you. I really like you."

And the woman will turn around and walk off, leaving him perplexed.

If he is smart, he will reply:

- "Look me in the eyes. Do you really think I hate you? No, I think *you* are the one who hates me."

They will look each other in the eyes.

And everything will go well in the best of possible worlds.

Implicit discourse, explicit discourse. Interactions. There's a connection, the 'current passes'. There's a vibe, there are *vibrations*. There are many ways in which one could describe what remains unsaid and the dissimulated silences amid the words making up the explicit discourse. It seems to me that this is what we should have actors concentrating on, much more so than on the actual exegesis of the text.

In the third volume of the *Poetics of Cinema*[44], I will be much more explicit, more generous, regarding analyses of specific cases and in proposing exercises. For the moment, a simple though useful schema should suffice.

Imagine three concentric circles. Each circle represents an image that the embodied character 'offers to itself'. The largest circle, the outer circle, is formed by the modes and attitudes that compose *the image of itself that the character would like to offer others*. This is how the actor would like others to see him, to appreciate him or to despise him. He may be honest or a cheat, cantankerous or sweet. This is how he would like to be seen, period.

The second circle is composed of gestures, attitudes, convictions, fables, terrors and ambitions, which taken together form *the image that the character has of itself*. This is how it sees itself. This is the character's looking glass.

The third and smallest circle is formed by the vortex of events that have been lived in *the character's intimacy*. It's the whirling image, the coming and going of remembered emotions, emotions that are yet to come, emotions that are imagined and dreamt. We should not forget that the three circles are images that the character

[44] *Poetics of Cinema 3*, to be published.

offers to itself and others. In this schema we do not see the representation of an appearance concealing ineffable truths. Nor should we interpret it as the re-elaboration of the imbrication of conscious and unconscious events. Rather, we are dealing with three ways in which to articulate the events and attitudes, both real and imaginary, constituting the three levels at which a character can relate with those who surround it. There is no more truth in one than in another. All three have their measure of trickery and deceit, of honesty, love and hate. Let's say that all three levels have a more or less equal emotional intensity. In all levels, rationality and irrationality coexist.

If, I, President of the Republic, solemnly met another President of the Republic, I would be bringing up the image corresponding to the outer circle (here the term 'image' is being used in the way that people in advertising employ it). And the same thing is happening to the Head of State that I have before me. If, suddenly, we discovered that both of us had attended the same school, and that we have childhood memories to share, then we would step into another level of intimacy. The image of the intermediate circle would be activated. And if certain memories, unpleasant or pleasant memories though essentially intense memories, engender uncontrollable emotions and we end up fighting, and eventually lead our countries to declaring war on each other, then, we would have activated the third circle.

Though we don't always have this type of synchrony. Often—though we've been to the same school—I will maintain the official image of myself and my homologous President will, perhaps, assume a more intimate attitude, open to complicities. And, indeed, when it's three or more who are present, the interactions will weave a spider web or *trellis*, generating a map of increasingly activating and deactivating relations. The emphasis on primarily working out these given relations, does not undo the work of constructing each character on its inside. Rendering it dynamic in volitional terms. Quite the opposite, the relations that the character holds with those who surround it will be proportionally more interesting, the richer the character, and insofar as more subtleties and meanderings are integrated into its persona.

To finish, I leave a theme that may give rise to misunderstandings and controversy: re-presentation and the doubling or splitting of self [*desdoblamiento*].

The splitting of self entails working the character on the outside of the actor's body. I do not know what scientific value Michael Talbot's ideas regarding the holistic universe may have, but I can assure you that they are extremely funny and enjoyable to hear. His description of a basketball team's training sessions in which he ascribed to each character a hologram that would represent it, really stayed with me. Talbot writes, paraphrasing NASA researcher Charles A. Garfield: "The Soviets have incorporated a highly sophisticated system of images in many of their athletics programs, as they maintain that images act as precursors to the generation of neuromuscular processes."[45] And later, quoting the Australian

[45] Charles A. Garfield in Michael Talbot's *The Holographic Universe* (London: Harper Collins, 1996.)

psychologist Alan Richardson, he contends that using a comparable system of images, an important improvement in the performance of a basketball team's players was obtained (28%). What is here applicable to the actor's training is the possibility of constructing a character 'alongside' the actor's own body. A holographic double made on the basis of enticing images accompanying the actor as its double: some form of *hamr*, an exterior double that would allow the actor to mentally anticipate that *dispositif* or device consisting of automatisms, which equally constitutes the character. A device composed of gestures and attitudes that have accompanied the character since its childhood: the way she scratches her nose, the way her gaze goes blank or the way in which she shrugs her shoulders. The character's web or receptacle of mechanised acts, which would take years to develop, does *not* belong to the actor; rather, it has been conjured up specifically for the character.

Representation is a different issue altogether. I use the term in different ways. In Central Chile and in other Spanish speaking countries of South America, one says of a dish that contains plenty of onion or garlic that it 'represents' itself. That is to say, it presents itself on the palate again, hours after it has been chewed. There is something analogous in the idea of re-presenting a character. There are numerous repetitions of emotions, with greater or lesser intensity, emotions that have already been experienced by the character and by us, as they form part of the film. A violent or pleasing situation that reappears abruptly. Victor Shklovsky offers us a slightly different definition: representations are repetitions of facts and events in a different way, which represent themselves anew, as if they had never appeared previously (even if they are really present in our memory because, I insist, they are in the film).[46]

But this is the theme for another chapter.

[46] Victor Shklovsky, 'Art as a device' in *Russian Formalism* (Edited by V. Erlich. The Hague: Mouton, [1917] 1955).

Locaciones, *locations*, location scouting, together form the decisive phase before the shooting. One chooses the sites where the film will be shot. For many, and, indeed, they are mistaken, the search for locations in which to shoot is no more than a technical peripeteia. There would be many reasons to believe this: sets [*decorados*] have already been foreseen in the screenplay. Foreseen, though, in what way? There are exhaustive scripts in which even smells are foreseen. However, the place where the filming will occur also has something to say. To speak of eloquent natural sets is almost a commonplace charged with inertia. Whoever has made more than ten films (it's a saying, some do get it straightaway), knows there are 'places that are awaiting', that are crying out in chorus for one to shoot them. There are others, on the other hand, which would rather remain unnoticed, far away from the cameras. To not show themselves, to not be seen.

Some may have guessed by now that the latter are in fact the most interesting. A set hides, as they say, because there is a *mystery* to it. It has something to hide. Let it not be said that I am anthropomorphising place against its will. But it is evident that the old saying: "Nothing will take place other than place itself" is, as a matter of fact, stating the opposite: "A place that hides or forgets what has taken place, does so because it swarms with phantom events". "A crime has been committed here," a French filmmaker once said, by which she meant that something in the place called for transgression. It is a place that has *its thing*, another might say (that is, I would say). However, what is this *thing*? No, it certainly isn't something terrible, extraordinary; an unthinkable event that may have taken place. Rather, it is the opposite. Even if the place denies it, it is asking *from within* to be filmed. It attracts the images that are yet to come. The events to come. I may have already said this before, but it bears repetition: the act of filming resembles in many ways a spiritualist séance. I have always found it difficult to accept Cocteau's famous phrase: "*Cinema is death at work*". Yet there is some truth to it. In shooting one always transacts with the beyond: an invocation, the convocation of spectres, the manipulation of magical objects, an altar, a sacrifice, the mystery. Indeed there is much to learn from old treatises on sorcery or religion. The norms that are used to choose a location for a scene are not very different to those that are taken into

account when erecting a temple, a convent or a sacred city. Geomancy treatises, no matter how arbitrary they may seem, can help us in finding, conjuring and invoking, the shadows of our ancestors and our unborn descendants.

It is said that Pablo Neruda, upon seeing for the first time the dead city of Machu Pichu, exclaimed: "What a pretty place for an *asado al palo*!"[47] I guess he was right, though what he said betrayed a certain regard for exorcisms. Like telling jokes at a funeral, or laughing in order not to cry.

If I mention exorcism it is because, I believe, its ceremony complements the spiritism inherent in the act of filming.

But we still haven't reached this point. We still haven't found the sets. From the outset we have not considered the fact that some scenes, certainly not all of them, will be shot in natural sets, pre-existing sets. Others will be filmed in the studio, on constructed sets.

A studio set [*decorado de estudio*], it is widely known, has two aspects that must be considered, its incompleteness and its functionality. Let's put to one side the issue of improbable materiality. There are filmmakers who feign that in certain films they get a whiff of the fresh paint, detect the phoney pasteboard. That there is no life. Thus, generally, the fact that a studio set is by definition incomplete is lost on them. And that this incompleteness can either reinforce or weaken the film. Elsewhere we spoke about the paranoiac impression of the incompleteness of the world: the poetic conviction that what we are no longer seeing, once it has been abandoned by the camera, dissolves into thin air or falls to pieces. It may be. But this non-being can itself be eloquent.

An example. In the *Fall of the Roman Empire*, a scholar in Roman history will not fail to notice that when the Capitol is shown, the camera is turned away from the part of the building that—as is known—had been destroyed by a fire. Of course, in this case, one would have to know it, but nothing stops us from imagining that what is not shown in the film, the kitchen or the bathroom, for example, has been destroyed by a bomb. Yet, do we care? Well, inasmuch as a character is always vanishing into the bathroom and the housewife is always coming out of the kitchen with just made dishes, then the issue may have some interest. There is a film by Samuel Fuller in which it is only right at the end that we come to see that the film's sets were right next to each other. We also realise that the different scenes in the film—the action having been set in a small South American village—really took place on five continents. In order to arrange this space, and this relates equally to natural sets, I propose we bring to cinema the ideas encompassed by Erich Jantsch's paradigm.[48] The schema that Jantsch proposes uses a square representing, in his case, an individual's habitat, and in ours, the peripeteias of a film through which a given character's activities develop. From within it various

[47] An *asado al palo* is a Chilean spit roast –TN.

[48] Erich Jantsch, *The Self Organizing Universe* (New York: Pergamon, 1980).

concentric spirals emerge, connecting us with the following: a) the place of work—it's really not that far, b) the city where the character dwells, c) the ecosystem and d) the solar system and the universe. These spirals concern us insofar as one can board them 'one way' or 'return'. The characters and events will leave every so often to *see the world*, but leaving open the doors to the exterior world so that they can return.

How does one do this?

It may have been Carmelo Bene who discovered, as something self-evident, that any set—no matter how banal it may be—is a planetary system and a cosmos, that the shoes trailing on the ground are meteorites, that the kitchen table is a planet and all the bread rolls are its moons. Literally.

Let's see.

A few years ago I was preparing a film (which was never made), based on Victor Hugo's novel *Les Travailleurs de la mer* ('Toilers of the Sea', 1866). I began by working on the sets, not by working on each one independently, but by considering their relations: macrocosm and microcosm. As is well-known, the main character in the novel lives in a house on the outskirts of a village in Brittany. 'A visited house', that is, a house haunted by ghosts. It was once the house of guardians... Guardians of what? No one knows.

There is a small stream and as it changes in colour, it announces changes in weather. Sometimes it brings drowned rats, or birds that have fallen from their nests. Once, only once, a severed hand, the hand of a hanged man; what sorcerers call "the hand of glory".

At twilight, people say, ghosts gather around a tree (an oak?). In fact, many circumstances allow the tree's shadow to metamorphose, leading the figures that surround it, spectres which are sometimes identifiable, to execute some form of tired and merry dance, accompanied by the whistling wind and the howling of dogs.

One day an extravagant character comes by. A Robertson, or someone like him. Robertson makes a spectacle using magic lanterns and artificial fumaroles.

A meeting is held in a cave not far from the house. Spectators from neighbouring villages arrive. The residents lock their doors and start praying with rosary beads. After the session, there is a heated discussion between the agnostic Robertson, the village priest and the local schoolteacher. Later that night, after the meeting, someone from the village returns to the cave where the spectacle had taken place, *seeing things*: lights, faces, hearing laughter. The protagonist's house creaks more than is reasonable.

Let's speak of the house's creaking.

Fung You Lan, a historian of Chinese philosophy, examines with irony and rigour each of the six divinatory arts of China.[49] The sixth method or path (*Shu-Shu*) is referred to as a 'system of forms' (*Hsing*), consisting of the prefiguration of

[49] Fung You Lan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1947).

future events by means of examining forms. Something akin to a comparative study of the large (the nine provinces, the seven states) and the small (a cabin, a palace or a walled city); and then from what is very small to the minuscule: a corner in the garden, the everyday lives of bees, toys. Above all, what interests us here is the interpretation of the creaking of houses and wooden boats. Its auditive configuration allows us *to hear* the future in unison, in some sort of sound structure that is, sometimes, given at once.

Let's return to the *Toilers of the Sea*. We may say that in the enchanted house we come across a sonorous discourse, where words take place. These noises, like the *ahume* (a heralding noise) of the Chilotes—the inhabitants of Chiloé in Southern Chile—anticipate future events.

For example: it turns out that at certain hours of the day, a breeze will slam shut a door. The breeze thus marks the passage of time. It happens twice a day: between nine and ten in the morning and between four and five in the evening.

The floor creaks when the weather is about to change: it begins at the back door, coming through the kitchen it reaches the hallway, up the stairs ending in the library and finally reaching the window that opens on to the street.

One day the house creaked the other way round: it began creaking at the window and ended when it reached the door at the back of the house.

That very same night a bolt of lightning struck the front of the house.

When a visitor enters the house, the keen observer will notice that creaks accompany the visitor's every move. Creaks that *comment* on inexplicable noises.

In the dining room, there is a painting depicting a sailboat in a tempestuous sea. The painting is always leaning to one side. Every day the owner of the house straightens it. But a few hours later the painting reassumes its previous position. This happens twice a day and is always accompanied by the cawing of crows.

The glasswork in the cabinet trembles every late afternoon, thus providing musical accompaniment to falling dusk. In the dark hallway one can hear, occasionally, the fluttering of cormorant wings. There are days when the flapping never ceases and can be heard throughout the entire night.

One can often hear the noise of a pack of cards being shuffled by an invisible person coming from the living room.

And just a few moments before sunrise, especially if it has been raining, one can hear the crackling of flames.

One day the notary turns up. The local authorities have asked him to verify, count and classify the noises.

Humid walls in which insidious stains regularly appear. They appear and disappear for no reason, always accompanied by a suffocating breathing.

The old sailor who once lived in the house had brought some souvenirs from his voyages. Rocks in all shapes and sizes: one has a Maltese cross on it;

another, faded faces; the other one, an eye. Many resemble snails whose strange figures provoke dizziness. The sailor's favourite memento is a compass that as he walks through the house has its needle swinging towards him, following him as if he were its magnetic north.

Elongated fingernails covering a set of Chinese silver fingernails.

There is a maid in the house who never speaks. She stitches and stitches, covering saltshakers, ashtrays, cups and saucers with her needlework; she has embroidered curtains and slips for chairs, for teapots, and a covering for the empty cage from where one can still hear the sardonic remarks made by the parrot, dead for many years. Gradually, the maid's embroidery has taken over the house. Later we will discover that the cross-stitch she uses is the language in which she recounts tales from the sea. The sailor is a curious ventriloquist, he has the ability to make all sorts of sounds: rocks falling on the roof, breaking glass, buzzing sounds and galloping horses. Whoever hears him might believe that the noises really do come from faraway. Someone tells a story. A man arrived in Puerto Roldán. A fire followed him like a dog. Many saw this fire as it came down the streets searching for victims. It burnt a house, it burnt the church, it burnt the theatre. The man left the village with stones being thrown at him. The fire still pursuing him.

There is an iron pot that many have seen, inside it a chunk of ice that glows as soon as the lights are turned off. And it never melts.

Mahogany boxes containing cat teeth and bird bones.

Our attention is drawn to a woman's portrait made with the hair of women from all races.

Others have seen a staggering Christ, made out of diminutive heads.

An orchestra composed of many musical boxes. When you hear it, the house is overrun by mice.

We must not forget the skull tattooed with Spanish cooking recipes, beautifully written in a nun's calligraphy.

The amputated foot of the sailor's father, in whose sole one can read the *Pater Noster* in Latin.

A mechanical hedgehog capable of launching arrows.

There is a flayed being of cheerful disposition, made in Italy. If you hit it three times with a silver hammer, it bleeds and then sings, hoisting all its flags.

The crowned heads of the seven dead dogs of the house.

Well, that's enough. The place becomes eloquent without it being necessary to crowd it with ghosts.

In the enumeration there abound *synchronies*, simultaneous events that are neither cause nor consequence, which nonetheless transfigure the place.

To say that they are neither causes nor consequences may require an explanation. The elements of a set, regardless of how absurd, disperse or heteroclite

they may be, are given as a totality (or, if one prefers, as a subtotality). One may speak of an order that emerges instantaneously, with the first glance of the eye, but an order that needs to be suggestive if it is to possess any tension without the intervention of actors. As it is simply there, it must allow its hidden order to be felt, which is neither cause nor consequence of what we are seeing, but which nonetheless renders possible the tension that I take to be indispensable for a dramatic event to occur. We could say that they explain the dramatic event—and this is one possible reading—they reveal it, they allow its manifestation ("it is the mystical", Wittgenstein would say). They render it ineluctable.

Let's look at the following case. In Andrzej Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), after an erratic and criminal life, the protagonist is close to death in a rubbish dump. And they belong to each other. Or, in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Che cosa sono le nuvole?* ('What are Clouds?', 1968—an episode of *Capriccio all'italiana*), the living dolls that have been thrown into the tip, while staring at the sky, they discover clouds: errant figuration and sorrowful foam.

Here the set, the landscape, the world exterior to human beings, is humanised, becoming a 'mental landscape'. But, what is this landscape?

Treatises on landscape attempt to follow the speculative meanderings that the previous dichotomy (or communion) maliciously suggests. We shall not travel down these paths, there are many, and they are embedded in philosophical presuppositions, which commonly end up devouring the event itself: the landscape-set [*paisaje-decorado*].

I will simply hold on to a few.

In *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, Jules Verne describes glimpsed landscapes resembling cities such as New York or London. Here we come across a vision of nature as *character*. An active nature. Dreaming of faraway cities. Ludovico Ariosto follows a similar thread with his epic poem *Orlando Furioso*. Angelica escapes from the evil Rinaldo:

Fugge tra selve, spaventose e scure,
per lochi inabitati, ermi e selvaggi,
il mover de le frondi e di verzure
che di cerri sentia, d'olmi e di faggi
fatto le avea con subite paure
trovar di qua e di la stranni viaggi.
Ch'ad ogni ombra veduta o in monte o in valle
temea Rinaldo aver sempre alle spalle.[50]

[50] "Through dreary woods and dark the damsel fled / By rude unharboured heath and savage height, / While every leaf or spray that rustled, bred / (Of oak, or elm, or beech) such new affright, / She here and there her foaming palfrey sped / By strange and crooked paths with furious flight; / And at each shadow, seen in valley blind, / Or mountain, feared Rinaldo was behind." Ludovico Ariosto, 'Canto 1-33' in *Orlando Furioso* (Oxford University Press, [1516] 1999).

Let us see. Angelica flees through dark and "dreary woods", deserted places. And the forest with its play of light and shadow, and aided by the scent of vegetation, leads her to find "strange and crooked paths", that is to say, she has visions. Each shadow she sees here and there, takes on or adopts the figure of the persecutor whom Angelica sees coming from every direction.

"*El arte imita la naturaleza, pero la naturaleza también imita al arte*" ["Art imitates nature, but nature also imitates art"], writes Palomino in his treatise on painting. "*Así como el arte se desvela diligente en imitar la Naturaleza; ella atravesando en sus obras, procura imitar al arte*" ["Just as art devotes itself diligently to the imitation of Nature, through its works, Nature seeks to imitate art"].[51]

Don Antonio writes, but only in passing, on the subject of rocks revealing the figure of the Maltese cross, about clouds that prefigure the face of the future king; regarding flowers that bleed on the very same days that important religious festivities are held (and Camporesi corroborates this); on multiple petrifications: rock forests at the bottom of the sea. Saint Patrick's biographers inform us that his famous staff—the one that Artaud hoped to find—could give rise to fires among which pagans would imagine themselves burning, as if already in hell; and that he availed himself of these images to convert people to the true faith. Antonio Torquemada describes, I seem to recall, mountains that imitate bearded heads. He believed that one of these was the 'living portrait' of a Christian head abusively decapitated by Barbarians ('living', for it was flowering and densely forested). Nature, it seemed, had diligently sought to denounce the whole world. Centuries later, a chronicler with a common name (a Pérez or a González), revisits the event, maintaining that some ill-informed miners searching for diamonds, and having perforated the mountain, discovered that the head contained a brain analogous to that of human beings. He holds that the miners, while exploring the natural caverns inside the mountain, came upon odd flickering lights, flashing on and off as if in luminous waves. He tells us that the doctor from the nearest town (Valparaiso del Sacro Monte) declared that these lights proved that the mountain was a living head and that it thought. And that consulting Ramon y Cajal, the latter burst out laughing and said:

> "Nothing that the whore of nature does could surprise me, but from what I hear you tell me, I would venture that your head rather than think, dreams. And that those flickering rocks you mention, may not be precious stones, but rather neurons."

Nevertheless, returning to Palomino, who affirms that it had been mischievous nature that, playing a joke on the men, had imagined: "caverns no more than four or five miles from the temple of Saint King and Martyr Don Edmundo.

[51] Don Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica* (Madrid: Aguilar [1715]

There a couple of men had shown themselves, green as grass and who when asked regarding their appearance, explained that in their kingdom or country, all men were green. This happened in the year 1140, in the time of King Stephen of England."[52]

But let us return to the locations that films shoot. In his book *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama considers the notion of an 'imaginal nature'.[53] Schama states—and I follow his account—that there are three factors, functions or themes that landscape suggests, determining three types of imaginary: "the water of rivers and lakes, the site of memory; the forest or labyrinth, the site of peripeteia and adventure; and mountain summits, the site of dénouement". Here we have a fine schema—though I am sure I have simplified it—that serves to integrate stories into the landscape that envelops them. But it should not be thought that when we are speaking about landscape, we are solely referring to those events that can be shot on location.

Whatever the habitat may be—country homes, city apartments in large cities, offices in booming or busting companies; an underground station that an anarchist group has chosen as its secret base, the Vatican, a Synagogue, a Mosque, or the changing rooms in a football stadium—if we look carefully, and through iconostasis cleanse dreams and visions, we should always find it possible to discern the labyrinth or forest, the water or the memory mirror, and the point of view from which to dominate space given as a whole.

I am not negating the distinction between an inside and an outside; if anything I am trying to incorporate them into a game that would allow us to enter the landscape and lose ourselves in our bedroom. We all know *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (1790) by Xavier de Maistre, a work that, despite its being more or less deceitful, exemplifies and serves to illustrate ideas linked to the 'exteriorisation of the interior' and the deeply intimate character of the outside.[54]

Here is a case that I know well. There is an apartment in which I often stay in the faraway city of Paris. One enters the apartment through the kitchen, and people, of course, always find that quite disconcerting. The door has been an inexhaustible source of misunderstandings: guests as they are searching for the exit, instead open the bathroom door and vice versa. To make things even more difficult, the apartment has three doors, thus unsettling door-to-door salesmen who at each door are greeted by the same person. There is a pointless hall where we—sorrowful souls—find all manner of disparate objects: an enormous and useless magical lantern, a scale model of a French ship (*La Superbe*), at least half-dozen cheap umbrellas, various musical scores, inexplicably dusty toys (truly inexplicable, as they are dusted every day), a fax machine, a treacherous rug on which someone is

[52] Palomino de Castro y Velasco, 'Prodigios de la naturaleza en abono de la pintura' in *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica* (1715).
[53] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).
[54] Xavier de Maistre, *Voyage Around My Room* (New York: Hesperus Press [1790] 2005).

constantly about to trip, a painting by Miotte and another by Kantorowicz. The hall opens out on to a library doubling as a room for guests, there books in Portuguese, Spanish, and in the Romance languages in general await reading. The library wall is lined by screenplays (30), poems (close to 300), novels (6), theatre plays (15), and many papers grouped under the heading 'Vanitytheque' (*Vanidoteca*). From there another door leads to the living room and dining room. In the living room an altar stands out—a smallish piece made out of stone and with four doors, each one depicting the figure of Christ—on it coexist several items: an Abyssinian priest's kilt, a seal for various sorts of documents, an altarpiece with two doors that would fit in the palm of your hand and the statue of a saint—I don't know which saint. A Japanese work of art, a reliquary packed with fingernails and hair (both of Malaysian origin); eight miniature sculptures made out of the teeth of Ecuadorian Indians; an Egyptian statue originally from a scribe's tomb (one of those Ptolemies); an image that smiles diabolically, Aztec in origin; a Jivaroan hunting whistle in the form of a plump woman; three Geisha visiting cards from Tokyo; a small oil painting by V. Scheihing, a little book written in a language that none of my friends can understand; and a little box for poison. All on top of a black marble table propped up by fourteen bad-luck bricks. Sheltered underneath the table is a basket crammed with kindling waiting for its time to come when it will burn in the fireplace right next to it; and on the mantelpiece one can see nine ruby-red Portuguese bottles, by their side, a vase with yellow roses. The table measures a metre and a half in length and is fifty centimetres wide.

Well.

It won't be necessary for me to continue the description in order for us to appreciate that all these objects appearing in the chaotic enumeration—reminiscent of what Spitzer offers on the subject of prominent trends in contemporary poetry[55]—seem to have simply fallen from the sky and are brought together with no discernable logic. Yet, there is a logic. In fact, not one, but two: 1) travel testimonies (recall the sailor's house in *Les Travailleurs de la mer*, and 2) limbo or purgatory: objects waiting to be placed elsewhere, where they may receive the homage that they merit.

Chaos, labyrinth, forest. A mirror on the mantelpiece offering itself as the lake of memory. On the other hand, we seem to have missed the summit; unless we climb on to a chair, and then on to another one, and finally end up going around the room from chair to chair. Like a small Humboldt. An exercise to which I devote myself, at least once a week.

In my film *The Territory* (1980), I played with the gradual transfiguration of a landscape. Little by little it became the film's protagonist: the monster, the beast (it was a horror flick). A group of American tourists lose their way in a Baroque

[55] Leo Spitzer, *Linguistics and Literary History: Essays in Stylistics* (Princeton University Press, 1948).

park in ruins. As the film progresses one realises that the characters *were hoping to get lost*. Each one was looking for a pretext to simply gulp down each other. Unquestionably, the triad was present: lake or river, forest, summit. But the characters on this occasion were solely concerned with the forest: their nightmare and their shelter. The water was polluted, the many dead fish made it impossible for one to see the mirror embodied in the lake. Likewise, when they did climb a mountain, they could *not* believe what they saw. There, no more than a mile away, a comfortable hotel on the summit.

There is much that one could say regarding this theme of 'landscape as protagonist'. Though it should suffice to evoke Werner Herzog's *Aguirre*, William Beckford's novel *The Vision* and a strange little story by Sheridan Le Fanu, *The Haunted Baronet* in which a lake—that is in truth all lakes—is the monster.[56] And, unquestionably, *Locus Solus*, the novel by Raymond Roussel in which a mysterious and delirious character, Martial Canterel, leads us through the gardens of a villa, filled with enigmatic signs and implausible machines. There is something about it that reminds me of a Chinese garden treatise and of Bomarzo's gardens, though I would suggest that it be read in parallel with Emanuela Kretzulesco-Quaranta's celebrated *Les Jardins du songe*[57].

[56] William Beckford, *The Vision: Liber Veritatis* (London: R.R. Smith Inc [1777-1778] 1930); Sheridan Le Fanu, 'The Haunted Baronet' in *Best Ghost Stories of J. S. LeFanu* (New York: Dover Publications [1870] 1964).

[57] Emanuela Kretzulesco-Quaranta, *Les Jardins du songe: Poliphile et la mystique de la Renaissance* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986).

Sanctuaries, groups, sects and teams.

This second part will be devoted to the work of the actor in cinema, to considering the actor as part of a team, as part of a group. On occasions this group is comprised solely of the actors in a film, or the characters that they represent—there is, indeed, a difference—other times, the team includes the technical team.

I use the term sanctuary essentially in the manner that Herman Kahn employs it: in a situation of war.[58] During the process of filming, in its everyday operations, cinema will often assume a martial model. In all wars, or at least during their initial phase, there are places, zones, even entire regions that must be respected. Areas that by common agreement, and often implicitly, are declared untouchable. The metaphorical thesis with which I would like to play, states that within the actor's personal world, a region for his intimate being, for his personality, must be invented. Further, this region has to remain intact, unknown and virgin. It is a region of which the actor has no knowledge. It is not a jungle, it is not a vortex, it is not the third circle—that is, the smallest one, which we discussed in a previous chapter—given that in this region we won't necessarily find secrets that cannot be confessed, ferocious passions. It is a region about which the actor decides—let's say arbitrarily—that it will not integrate the other provinces of the territory or country that constitutes his character. This means, from the outset, that the character being played and by which one is played, has also decided not to touch the unknown zone. This applies equally to the other actors, the group making up the cast, and to the characters one speaks about though will never see. In this game, notions such as the *family secret*, the *state secret*, the *forbidden city*, the *sacred mountain*, and the *mined territory*, provide us with clues as to how we should incorporate them into the game that is the film, considered as a set of peripeteias but also as a finished game.

Let us first look at the sanctuary within the actor. His psychology and his body (and it might be better not to look for the differences between the two). I believe that in the first volume of the *Poetics of Cinema*, I alluded, half jokingly, to a Lusitanian specialty. The habit, impulse or joke that consists of making up a secret for

[58] Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear war* (New York: The Free Press 1969).

oneself. A secret that right from the beginning, the guardian or depository (who is referred to as the *imaginaria*, a sentinel, in the military jargon of Peruvians, cf. Mario Vargas Llosa, *The City and the Dogs*, 1963) has sworn with a playful solemnity to keep everyone unacquainted with—until death secretly parts them. The idea of a sanctuary that I am proposing for the film actor is really not very different. Though we should never forget that the film is made up of sovereign fragments that constitute its physical geography, brought together by a *continuum*; the latter being really no more than a simple convention. The ensemble of fragments constitutes the sanctuary's physical geography and the continuum constitutes, we may say, the political geography (borders, frontiers, summits, river sources, disputed territories, all of the above are its concern). In the territory or country named 'cinema', vicinity creates continuity. Seven takes, subject to the effect of continuum, offer us a completed film. So will seven thousand, and it might not be a very different film.

How can we make the sanctuary visible without showing it? I will make use of two digressions.

The first useful metaphor is a legend that relates the gathering up of the scattered limbs of Osiris' body. One should recall that Isis, Osiris' sister-wife, collects his dismembered body, limb by limb. Though there is a single part that she cannot find: the virile member. She decides to bury the incomplete Osiris, scattering him. Each part of his body will become the founding member of a province in the kingdom, which thus becomes an extension of Osiris' scattered body. But, on each partial tomb, Isis will build an obelisk, a monument to Osiris' virile member. I have not the science nor the industry to follow the many paths of mystery and allegory that dress the myth, but I would like to hold on to a particular aspect: the open secret, Pulicinella's secret, which once proclaimed, recovers its condition of invisible city, virgin forest, military territory; what do I know! It becomes invisible for all to see.

The second metaphor belongs to Edgar Allan Poe: the purloined letter that everyone is searching for and that nobody can find as it lays in the most ordinary of all places: that spot on the set that is constantly being used, hence no one will bother to examine carefully. Inertia and déjà-vu have allowed it to disappear. The letter has been devoured by the inertia of the place in which it exposes itself.

The first conclusion is that the sanctuary must be visible, too visible for all to see. Let's recall that we had said earlier that the sanctuary was the region in the actor's world, which the actor had decided neither to disclose nor to explain. But, one wonders, is this true only of the actor? Let's take a simple case: the limping actor. No one will refer to him as crippled and he won't speak about it either. Gradually we won't see anything but his limping, waiting in vain for some form of explanation. Well, one gets the idea, it may work, but it's not enough. Let's ask the screenwriter for help. At the end of the film, or better still, halfway through the

film, suddenly, the limping actor starts running. He stops limping in order to run away from his persecutors. Then, as if nothing had happened, he returns to his old ways, he continues limping, and the story follows the course set out in the script.

We speak of limping, that is to say, of the body. Here we have a new digression on a seemingly unexpected topic—though I imagine you might be getting used to it by now—it will lead us towards the speculations prompted by the theory and practice of the Rolfing method. I assume it's sufficiently known for it not to require explanation. Let's hang on to the notion of *bodily memory*. The fiction or fantasy (apparently both real and verifiable) affirms that each part of the body retains the memory of lived events; and furthermore, that there are interconnections between the different regions of the body as they exchange and trade pains. I sense that there are possibilities amid this bartering of pains for the development of characters. As we are not talking in terms of therapy, our game may remain in the field of the imaginary. We may sovereignly decide (though we would not know whether this would be verifiable) that a troika comprising the sole of the left foot, the right cheek and the navel, is the site of the twelve-year old character (and the moment when its misfortune began). Or, that both knees, the nose and the molars have conspired against the stomach, and that they are the happy owners of the meta-pain that will drive the character to commit suicide. The idea that I consider to be important, and with which I hope to entertain you, asserts that the body is a book of lived stories, invented and feared, which are trading among themselves and struggling to come back to life and emerge on the surface of the body. Reducing the idea to its caricature, we affirm that this perversion of Rolfing's method allows us to transform a Hamlet or a Sigismund into a mass of peremptory and opinionated ailments. Thus, every time Sigismund remembers that Astolphus had him imprisoned in a tower, his nose will itch, and scratching his nose, his left hand will cramp, and while comforting it, he will begin vomiting copious amounts of a black and odourless liquid. The nose-hand-stomach troika has come into action. But later it will be eliminated by melancholy, which luminously speaks to the character, saying: "What is life? An illusion, a shadow, a fiction." Et cetera. But this luminosity will spark off a trembling in the legs, itself linked with heaviness in the nape of the neck and a dry cough.

Here we have the Rolfing method and the composition of character.

Paraphrasing Doctor Knock we may say: "Every character in a film is an ill person who is being ignored".

Nearing the end of the 60s, the sociologist Saul Landau expressed his opinion on the subject of group psychology as applied to certain rock bands. "Take the Beatles, for example. John Lennon is the poet. George Harrison, the musician. Paul McCartney, the soul. And the other, Ringo Starr, the demiurge." Maybe. One could invert the roles and nothing much would change. Though it would not be the first time that a mistaken or spurious theory leads us towards the discovery of a vital

truth. Many years later, a French epistemologist whose name I wilfully forget, affirmed: "In all restricted groups with minimum agglutination, for instance, a group of tramps, a string sextet, a team of quantum physics researchers or a ministerial cabinet, in order for these to function we must have, of necessity, among the members: a genius, a poet and an imbecile."

I find it hard to agree with these friends. In my experience of working with groups, geniuses and poets do not abound. There is a simple reason for this, genius is no more than childhood recaptured at will (Baudelaire), poets live to die in their beyond; and imbecility, though volatile and nothing essential, stays firmly in one place. Nevertheless, we can make use of this affirmation and apply it to a group of characters who coexist in a film. As they represent themselves in fragments, each character may be an imbecile in a shot, and a genius in another, etc. Let's take this idea further. What would happen if in each incarnation of a *condition* (i.e. each time the actor becomes the poet, the artist, the fool or the mystic), another actor is required to assume the alternative moral or intellectual condition. In other words, in each film an actor must take on a condition, and, at the same time, the correlate that modifies his condition. Victor Hugo, in his book on Shakespeare (1864), tells us that in most of Don William's plays, protagonists cause each other to suffer as much as the story that they live makes them suffer. Let's accept that in forms of reticular dramaturgy (*Dallas* or *Dynasty*—straightforward examples), the webs are determined by pairs of characters in such a way that when one embodies the criminal, the other will immediately incarnate the detective. Three scenes later, the tables have been turned. Each change in a pair of characters brings with it a change in the totality of pairs. The outcome is a permanent shifting in moral values. What concerns the actor in this situation is controlling his changes in moral being while at every stage taking into account his paired character who acts in solidarity. The film's interest lies in the deployment and withdrawal of situations in *multiple conflict*. Someone might say: a polymorphous Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde. For this game, one might invent a joker: a fool, the simpleton who can be opposed to the wise person, the criminal, the poet and the entrepreneur. Though it is clear that in any fiction like the one I have just outlined, each character is basically played in two ways: as what it is (its role in the story) and as what its provisional state might be. Giving us, for example, a scene in which the poet, whose Franciscan poverty we had duly noted, behaves as if he were a millionaire, while we see his correlated character, a true millionaire, falling into an abyss of avarice. Or, we see an entrepreneur, an assassin's correlate, behaving like a poet while his supplementary opposite (the assassin), behaves like a saint.

Another relation of a substantially different kind would have us create character triangles: two who oppose each other and a mediator. Or imagine a group of five or more. But now that would be geometry. Although we could apply this to family histories and other equally audacious enterprises.

There is an extreme example that comes to mind. Artificially created families with five or more members, forced to live together and under the moral obligation to despise each other. However, if by an excess of jealousy one of the children were to kill another, or if one of them were to die from a fever, then, all five would be executed. It seems that we owe this less than friendly caveat to the first Emperor of China.

I would like to write: "Yet we shall develop this theme later". But the translators who at this very moment are rewriting my words into inadequate and foreign tongues, have already made me realise that each time I have said "but this theme will concern us later", I have, in fact, forgotten it forever.

What can be salvaged from my discourse on the play of the actor as 'member of a group'? Well, if we accept that an actor's character, while being 'one', provisionally assumes 'others', we appreciate how it is that there gradually emerges from within the film's peripeteias, a character that is equally unique, but who is composed of a multiplicity of characters. There is a specific case that I have in mind—about which I have already written elsewhere—to be precise: the *serrata* in Venice in 1297. In those days good Venetian families, numbering by then six thousand people or so, decided that the game of aristocratic ascensions should come to an end, arresting it by means of *numerus clausus*. If we examine the process, and taking into account the societies I have studied, beginning with 19th Century Chilean society, in which stratification was gradual and came about relatively late—its emergence can be traced to the early 1820s and its consolidation occurs around the 1850s, opening up again towards the end of the century with the appearance of liberals—we see that social roles have already been distributed with the actual creation of the republic. The aristocrat, the common man and the upstart (the Chilean *siútico*)[59], have not yet become the well-structured classes with which we are now familiar. An impoverished man, someone on the breadline—a Chilean might say a *roto*—will always have something of a gentleman about them, and the upstart will, at times, behave in a vertiginously pendular fashion. With much incoherence and self-loathing. But by mid-century we have a corpus of laws and decrees, delimiting social roles: the wealthy shall remain wealthy, and the poor, poor. The reason being that the most important sources of wealth are subject to a monopoly and handed over to the aristocracy; an elite rather more arbitrary than that of other nations. For those who remain excluded from prosperity, there are few possibilities to climb and *arrive*: laws disallow it. In fact, there is but one possibility, bordering on the illicit: the brothel (I am citing Professor Jorge Guzmán who has personally given me these abhorrent details regarding the 19th Century Chilean Human Comedy, which few people know as well as he does). Were I to film this

[59] The term plays on the name of Don Juan's servant, Marcos Ciutti, José Zorilla's *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844).

epoch, first and foremost, I would have to entrust myself to actors who know how to be uncertain—diffusing themselves throughout the composition—who can act as if they were elsewhere. More or less, in the manner in which I believe Anton Chekhov has to be represented in cinema. In essence, this would mean that each actor would always have the desire to be elsewhere, to be where he is not. In the first half of 19th Century Chile, 'elsewhere' was embodied in another social class. We see a *double debasement*: the young gentleman from a good family who comes down to the brothel so as to delight himself with being a gentleman, and the upstart (*siútico*) who is both a man from a good family and wretched (*roto*).

It is one thing to say it and quite another to represent it. To become the other and to make oneself the other. Unamuno in his reading of *Don Quixote* places the emphasis on the reciprocal conversions: Sancho's quixotic conversion and Don Quixote 'sanchification'.[60]

Returning to the Chilean case: the will, the desire, the *Ilinx* that all have to be *in* the national being. *Common man*, *Jedermann*, *l'homme moyen*, the mass-man, a character made of abstractions; how does he show himself in a single body? An actor would have the inevitable tendency to situate his character in the antipodes of the multi-personal character: "los hombres del hombre" ("the men of man"), E. Barrios; the polymorphous Doctor Jeckyll-Mr Hyde. To do such a thing, I believe, would be a mistake. Unanimity, I think, comes about by accentuating the most significant parts of a character, reaching a point where these are of greater importance in their own right, than as part of the harmonious whole. Moving synecdoche. In such a way that we don't notice anything other than the left hand now that the declamation of its text is a backdrop, and over there, on the contrary, there are nothing but words and the left hand itself. One diversifies the centres of attention of the actor's corpus. But, dominating everything, it will be necessary to introduce an impenetrable element: the gaze. A gaze that is unforgettable because it is inexpressive. "*Inamible*", a Chilean peasant might say, this adjective that is all adjectives (and hence untranslatable even for Chileans themselves).[61]

The man that lacks all qualities is *inamible*. He is dispersed yet emphatically unengaged. The individual-character searches for itself, affirming itself through its search for a reasoned disequilibrium. The *inamible* man flees from himself searching for equilibrium, yet at the end he is a unique nothing. And in a way he is everyone. *Jedermann*.

At this point I think it may be possible for me to bring up an idea, which the owner of my local bar in Paris—just round the corner—will often repeat as if it were a truth that no self-respecting person could forget: all of us, some more so than others, represent, at least twice a day, most of humanity. We are all *Jedermann*, at

[60] Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1905).

[61] Cf. Baldomero Lillo's *Inamible* (1907).

least once a day. Or Christ, or an innocent man from Israel, if you wish. For every actor, the *Jedermann* awaits around the corner. And the actor must take him on, assume him. Then, forget him, in order to return to the character that fortune has allowed him to play in the film. To be and not to be, that is the question. But to be and not to be at the same time. It is possible, if we avail ourselves of a notion, though this one is, perhaps, harder to swallow: representation by mediating aura.

It will be necessary to return to a metaphor-idea that had been developed earlier: the hologram. One may recall that Talbot assures us that we can fabricate a double of ourselves, a *moving holographic photograph*. And as we are talking about holograms, let's imagine that each part contains the totality. If I cut the hologram-image's finger off, a new though smaller *my-self* appears. Given that it's a photograph, we may enlarge it, especially as it is a mental photograph. That is, it is realised by sheer imaginative force, though a particular type of imagination, for it is *willed*, it is volitional. Let us imagine the following situation: my holographic double is six feet tall. And the one that appears after having cut off its finger, this one I enlarge until he is six metres tall. Then, I will cut this one's ear off. I will make the ear a hundred metres long. This ear, like Morelli's ears, will contain the totality of my first holographic double. I will repeat this ghostly operation until a holographic nebula of my-self is diffused throughout the entirety of the celestial vault. I say ghostly and nebulous because, each time one amputates a fragment from the hologram, its image loses definition. The incommensurable vault, covering all, diffuse and lacking in outline, has now become unrecognisable.

This infinite plain, that's me.
This incessant snow, that's me.

Thus reads a poem by Stephen Spender, titled *Napoleon*.[62]

Vain enlargement of my theatrical being, the embodiment of all men in a dictator, a king, an emperor, a hyper-mediated rock-'n'-roller. Here we have a paradoxical way in which to incarnate *Jedermann*: the public man. So large and unattainable that he has become invisible. The *buta* of Chilota mythology (so large that one cannot see it).

How does one represent *all men*, *Jedermann*, as king of the world? As a lonely man? As the dictator who strolling through the palace of ten thousand mirrors confuses himself with his 200 doubles? Or as one who, smiling under the rain, is condemned to smile even in his coffin, for they are always filming him? The image-man, let's say Tony Blair (NB A. Blair, the Prime Minister of Great Britain as the first edition of this book was in print, deceased two years later). Or the synchronic-man: the Emperor of China, whose every gesture, or itch, scratch, sneeze and tachycardia, provoke earthquakes, droughts, barbarian invasions or

[62] Stephen Spender, *Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934).

simply good business. Once more, I would say, a combination of all three. To combine agile Napoleon, silent and pedantic, who seems to know everything prior to learning; with the spokesperson for the man of the masses, who can only smile, for his condition has made him a blind 'smiler'; or with the reduction to a human scale of the empire, the country or the neighbourhood.

Too vague? Let's see... We are dealing with a man who is like all other men. The man in question is an actor who represents the mass-man. The rest are really extras that have been chosen because they resemble the main actor. He smiles when everyone smiles (that is, almost always) and stops smiling as soon as someone from the crowd starts to smile (which gets everyone smiling). A man who, when hearing news, smiles and rubs his hand, for he knows that the cramp in his hand, inexplicable as it is, can cause fires in summer. This superior man, the mystical body of all men, the *hombre masa* as Ortega y Gasset once put it, who struts about with his imperfections and hides his lack of talent, a probable source of much unpopularity. In fact, the talented pianist (hence the cramps) is hard at work looking for ways in which to poorly perform works of little grace, thus allowing for all to confuse themselves in him. Confusing and fusing themselves in him. Camus in his play *State of Siege* (1948) shows him to us in a petty officer's uniform, and puts cruel words in his mouth that reveal his contempt for those who are subordinate and subordinate themselves to his way of subordinating. One should think of Hitler offering his hand to everyone, as if asking for forgiveness, suddenly assuming the stiffness of the sacred image; the icon that salutes by responding to the ovation. He salutes someone who is situated somewhere above the crowd, he salutes the mirror that offers him his own image, now transformed into *Jedermann*. He is legitimated by the reflection.

Power has many ways in which it can be made flesh, at times in a group of people, and at others in a single person: the barefooted millionaire on bicycle; the Austrian Emperor as seen by Saint Simon: sleeping in the Palace's kitchen and dressed as the butler, waiting for the French Ambassador to present his credentials. Traps, disguises, inversions. Mark Twain offers us an eloquent example in his novel *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882). The Prince's double has been invited to the Palace; as they are children, they seek to play, swapping clothes. We all know what follows or we can all guess it. The Prince, dressed as the Pauper, is expelled from the Palace. It will all end well. But what if they start to like the game? What would happen if, for example, every so often they meet up and exchange situations, playing the game until its ultimate consequences? After some time, the Prince will no longer know whether he is a prince or a pauper. Permutations and contagion. I will be satisfied if it's clear that to represent power—that is, abstraction as an 'out-of-place concreteness'—is a task that is rich in possibilities; and this in virtue of an old anarchist background, which should always be the principal source of energy when one essays such representation.

But I have the impression that it's time to return to Talbot's metaphorical hologram, as he conceives it by following the ideas of Bohm and Pribram. Here we may find yet another way in which to represent the mass-man. We may, provisionally, name it the *holographic shaman*. De Heusch, whom we have already quoted, was one of the first anthropologists of religion to recognise the value of the distinction that Mircea Eliade had established between 'possession' and 'shamanism', considering the two as somehow opposed functions. In possession (as far as we are concerned we may refer to it as the *Stanislavski function*) the other whom the actor will represent comes from the outside, occupying and dominating him; the actor either adopts (adorcism) or expels (exorcism) the other.

In the case of a holographic-shaman, the actor creates a mental character for himself, an imaginary double, but the actor's copy *conforms*. Recall that the double has three images: its own ambassador, the intimate double and the madman. In the preceding chapter we made use of a schema with three concentric circles in order to understand the images. As if in Afanasiev's *Russian Stories*, we may imagine these as three brothers who journey to the other side of the world.[63] While the actor who is locked in his room, plunges himself into his dreams, the doubles fly off. Each one has agreed to follow his own path, searching for adventure. They will meet a week later at Hangman's Tree. For the actor who is locked in his monastic chamber, a week will be no longer than an hour. At the crossroads, the first double takes the road to the left. The second double goes straight ahead, and the third takes the road to the right leading him to Bald Hill.

The first one, who is always well-dressed, well-received and has good manners and an easy smile, walks across country, and as night falls he finds a cemetery where he decides sleep for the night. Unfortunately, the cemetery's spectres don't have the courtesy to wait until midnight. They attack him immediately. The diplomat greets them one by one, using their first names! For an instant, the spectres interrupt their dance and retreat. But then immediately, they jump on the young gentleman, pushing and pulling, biting him furiously, adorning their horror with asynchronous howling. The second brother, the introspective one who is very concerned with himself, walks through lovely tree-lined paths, and in the distance he sees a beautiful green woman.

- "Who are you?" asks the lady.

- "I am not sure," replies our Narcissus, "I have forgotten my mirror."

- "Why aren't you green?"

- "I wouldn't like to be green."

She is offended, but the young man doesn't want to lie or to be less than honest. The lady grabs him by the hair, and flies off. She makes him see distant cities.

- "Don't you see how green the world is?"

[63] Alexander Afanasiev, *Russian Fairy Tales*, (Pantheon Books, 1976).

- "I would love to please you and praise the world's greenness. But I don't like it. What do you want me to do?"

- "One has to acknowledge your forthrightness."

- "Thank you," he says. "I wouldn't like to think of myself as a dishonest person."

- "I suppose, you don't like me," the lady says, as she lets go of him.

The young man falls and falls.

As he falls, he comes to think that he is about to die, but he doesn't lament it. He is truly pleased with his honesty.

Self-absorbed in his interminable fall he does not realise that someone else falls by his side.

- "Ugh! I am not alone!"

- "Fallen angels, there's no shortage of those around here."

- "I am not an angel."

- "Oh, really? So, what are you then?"

- "A person just like everybody else, with virtues and flaws. And you?"

- "A faller. Everything in me falls."

- "Do you enjoy falling?"

- "Frankly speaking, no. But look, open your eyes."

The double, this hater of green, is now aware that in the distance there are many others who fall.

- "There's a lot of falling happening around here," says the angel.

- "And why do *you* fall?"

- "Well, because we speak the truth. Impossible as it is."

- "What?"

- "Truth is unspeakable, it takes time to speak the truth, and time is fickle. It likes to amuse itself by changing one's opinions."

- "That's right. I am just about to start liking green. And I don't think I can continue living without that green lady. But if I say it, I'll lose my image."

- "I understand," says the angel, "the image we have of ourselves is something inestimable."

- "I have now decided that I don't like the green lady. Done. I have said it."

- "And it's a shame."

- "But I've just changed my opinion. I love blue ladies, no I don't, pink ones, no, white."

- "You don't know what you love."

- "Yes, how strange. If I want to be honest with myself and others, then it would be best not to make any pronouncements."

- "Well put!" the angel exclaims.

They continue falling for some time in silence.

The third brother, the mad one, climbs Bald Hill tirelessly. As he goes on he can see settled but perishing hamlets, colourful and toylike. Normally such a peaceful collection of elements would make him baulk, but the ascent has made him contemplative, almost indifferent. He makes his way through steep paths, demented trees and vertiginous slopes; he is overwhelmed and his emotions summon his ill-mannered delirium. The madman doesn't recognise himself. He doesn't find in his self the spirit to enjoy himself, nor does he find his erotic vertigo. No hymn to feast, no euphoric tantrum solicits him. What's happening? Is he no longer mad? Him, no: without him realising it, the landscape has stripped him of his frenzy, which not long ago he enjoyed in excess. Finally, he reaches the summit. The wind and snow beat a doubled-up figure. An old woman who sews and sews, talking to herself.

The madman approaches her, he recognises her.

- "Mother."

The old woman won't answer.

- "Mother, what are you sewing?"

She won't answer, but he understands what she is not saying:

- "I am weaving your life."

- "But I have no life. My life is vertigo, changing without end. I move from one outburst to another."

- "I keep to my sewing so that your life may change once and for all."

- "My life does nothing but change."

- "I will change you. When I finish embroidering these points and crosses, your tremulous crossings, your life will gain a single form. It will have been and it will be. As the prophets say: 'It has been written'."

Moved, the madman kisses her forehead and begins his descent. The shamanic actor is now waking up. His three holographic doubles stand before him, they look at him.

- "Did you have a good trip?"

- "That depends on how you look at it," says the double wearing a tie and laughing uncontrollably.

- "I don't know who I am or who I want to be," says the introspective one.

- "Our lives are rivers," states the mad one.

The perplexed actor is wondering whether the shamanic journey was worth it, he finds the three doubles changed.

- "Well, nothing is the matter then. There would be a problem if only one of us had changed. But all three at the same time... Everything changes, everything

stays the same... right?" says the indecisive double, who once thought of himself as honest. And happy to be so.

And as they speak they begin to join up, like in a dissolve.

The character's triple hologram is indefinable. At first sight it is truly extravagant, it laughs at inopportune moments and passes from panic to hilarious outbursts with ease. But suddenly, it sighs and utters words that are meaningful, mixing formulas of courtesy with impeccable manners.

- "This madman is much more sober that we had thought," thinks the actor, observing his character's triple hologram.

But as soon as he forms the favourable judgment, he understands that a violent frenzy that is difficult to contain roams deep within, which—though not about to give way to an outburst—confers on the third hologram a strange restlessness. And a restless profundity.

There is a long silence. The actor whispers, saying:

- "And I who had thought to put into practice the method of the three concentric circles that I had adopted. And now everything is mixed up."

Then, looking once more at the hologram, resigned to his way of being, so clearly his own—these abrupt changes from madness to bourgeois parsimony—he says out loud:

- "Well, Waldo, we should get working."

The actor and his holographic double sit at the table, facing each other. They study Ibsen's *Spectres*.

The fable I have just put forward can serve, above all, as a counterexample to a quasi-method that I have put into practice in my films: the embodiment of character by privileging its relation with other characters, while leaving structure in the background. There are certain evidences that one is in the habit of forgetting. Not only do characters change, but they evolve based on their intimate being, due to their volitions and the many ways of realising them. They are prisoners of their social body, moved by it. I think it is correct to speak in terms of a 'social body', not a medium or a class. Baudrillard would affirm (though in person he seems less emphatic) that there is no such thing as social reality, but only simulacra: the simulation of itself, the simulation of the social condition and the dark and indecipherable world of the masses. One may say: I am as I have been made, I am my structure, but this structure overwhelms me, as I don't cease to extend myself through my many means: impossible wants, objectless hatreds; I am blind to what is there for all to see, solely focusing on my irrelevant details, agitating them. I am myself and my own awkwardness, my own hell—as Swedenborg would say—subject to a permanent battle of wills (recall Ribot—who has most likely been surpassed by other moderns, though still relevant, even if only indirectly via Stanislavski's method—writing about two wills: the first an I-want; the other being darker, pulsating, and constituted by many bodies).

I am my ascending or descending social condition; half *curriculum vitae*, half influencing friendships—to which we would now have to add the ethereal self, 'my image on the net'. And I am the mass-man made up of collective anxieties, sporting ecstasies, xenophobias and fashions. Let it be so. We can refer to these three levels as simulacra, given that what predominates in each one is an imaginal reality. Nevertheless, we are primarily cyclones (Francisco Varela's image), or simply put, whirlpools in the cosmic river (Bohm's phrasing). That is to say, we are in movement.

In a certain way, the representation of this movement demands its own articulation. In the best of cases, this seems counterintuitive. It is, as they say in my country, harder than getting hold of the soul's arse. But let's see, if we replace the term 'articulate' not with 'constructing', but with conducting, guiding or channelling—as one might say of the drinking water that reaches our house each day—then, we are stepping on firmer ground.

Firmer? Not too firm.

"More organic", as Bill Baldwin would say, referring to the manner in which emotions, as they rise and envelop the will, tend to manifest themselves in the actor's body as spasms. But controlled emotion, even if guided through channels will still emerge through all kinds of retainers, thus acquiring a certain regularity. "Keep cool, keep your distance", an actor from *La Comédie Française* would say. Not such naive advice if we consider that both the starting point and end point are composed of narratives linked (too much so, at times) by a written text which must allow itself to be seen, like in an erotic dance, by means of concealments and successive exposures.

In France, beheadings are not only part of the folklore, they are also a philosophical instrument: *res cogitans*, *res extensa*; two types of things that dreams and mirages separate; the head cannot be touched by the hands. France "chops off the heads that stick out", writes Cocteau. In film it wasn't long ago that one would first illuminate the head, then the rest of the world (including its bodies). Bad tongues say that in the National Conservatory, an actor either speaks or moves. The actor who would like his head to join his body, really has to move to England, and keep on studying. I imagine they exaggerate, but when one reads in parallel the courses of Alfred Cortot and Claudio Arrau—concentrating the attention on the fingers (Cortot's *parlé* style) or placing the attention as far as possible from the fingers and executing with the whole body (Arrau's *organic* interpretation)—one is forced to accept that the problem exists at various levels and in different disciplines.[64]

Once more, my solution is a mixed one: to work the representation of emotions by use of retention rather than by explosion. On the one hand, breaking the natural flow of discourse, on the other, playing with political calculation, the "what will they say?", the public image. But there is another aspect.

Constructivism—or at least one of the variants that I practice—entails the *provocation and reception* of the other's acting at all times. To behave, we may

[64] Alfred Cortot, *Cours d'interprétation* (Paris: Legouix, 1934); Joseph Horowitz, *Conversations with Arrau* (New York: Knopf, 1982).

say, as if one were a football team. Football is a constructivist spectacle. It teaches us how to surpass the action-reaction model by playing in a pendular manner. Each player's initiative provokes its immediate counteraction, further, the player who supports the initiative, has to act in relation to both the opposing player who reacts and in relation to the player with the initiative. By extension, both teams advance by constructing and deconstructing plays. During the good moments we get the impression that they are playing with a common objective: the spectacle, and not simply victory or the other's defeat.

But let's return to cinema. Imagine that we are watching a game. We have somehow gained interest in the game's story, the 'who is going to win?' The first half is over and we are now capable of distinguishing the players. Suddenly we notice that one of the players, the forward, the goal scorer, hasn't got much hair; another has grown a beard; another has been sunbaking or is losing his teeth. Gradually we come to understand that we haven't just seen a match, but many. Each take of the action is separated from the next by a few years. Numerous ideas jump into our head (beheaded as it is): Einstein's 'time-dimension', Philip K. Dick's *Simulacra*, Abel Gance's shooting of *Napoleon* (1927), John Conway's 'Game of Life'. But before looking for an explanation we ought to understand that while some players age, others are getting younger, reaching their childhood, and a few others are jumping in time, forwards and backwards. Here we can do no better than cling on to Fred Hoyle's principle of stability (whom I know through his science fiction novels). But this is already part of another chapter.

So let's return to the actor's strategies. We had left him amid paradox and dilemma. To show and convince us of the veracity of his crying, or to reveal it by containing it, convincing us that his sorrow is real. Ignoring what awaits him (death by a bullet) and to smile happily, despite his having read the script.

To discover that he had been talking the whole time in verse; he, Monsieur Jourdain who thought he had been speaking in prose. Each phrase has its own metre (from the monosyllable onwards), and it has already been codified. A game, it must be noted, which is rich in possibilities. In this regard, one should take account of Cicero's admonitions regarding the dangers of speaking in prose given its metrical undertones.

In a recent essay published in the journal *Poetique* (excuse me, Monsieur Gérard Prunelle), the author discovers that Jean-Paul Sartre's novel *Nausea* (1938) is laden with alexandrines (i.e. twelve syllable verses). It is a commonplace to say that the French language has the alexandrine marking its rhythmic undertone (let's say as its *continuous bass*), that Italian is hendecasyllabic and Spanish, essentially, octosyllabic. Once more, it would be the actor's task to mark or blur, to allow for the unavoidable versification of each language's natural rhythm to be heard or misheard. But here we have a theory for the *Poetics of Cinema 3*.

THE FACE OF THE SEA (IN PLACE OF AN EPILOGUE)

Often, and at times immodestly, I have made use of metaphors in order to approach intuitively certain ideas; many of which could best be described as images and half-glimpsed visions. I hope that among them it is the angelic smile rather than the sardonic irony or the biting impetuousness that has the upper hand.

'Metaphor' is a word that has a bad reputation among theorists. To use it implies that one does not have clear ideas, and in that case, the best thing to do is to remain silent. That may be so and I regret it. Yet, in the present state of the arts: does anyone have clear ideas?

I would like to quote James C. Maxwell in order to defend my use of metaphor: "The figure of speech or thought by means of which one transfers the language and ideas of one science with which we are familiar, to another with which we are less so, can be termed 'scientific metaphor' ".

Let this stand for the *Poetics*, which would like to be no more than an incitement to reconsider certain well-known commonplaces. A commonplace is some sort of vacant lot that no one frequents and that all have forgotten, until one day someone finds a corpse or oil. Now, cinema is also the art of organising commonplaces around one or many stories. I suspect that if in each vacant lot (that is, in each one of the film's shots) we place, a corpse over here, and a treasure over there, and an amusement park elsewhere, by the end of it, we will have a greater urge to stay in the vacant lots. Even if they are all linked by some motorway. I mean to say, a story.

My last digression makes use of a metaphor that is much harder to accept. Films are like human beings: you look at them and they look back at you.

Two fictions that almost contradict each other serve as the starting point for my digression: Fred Hoyle's *Black Cloud* and the images of the ocean at the end of A. Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972).[65] In both cases we are told about and made to see phenomena of nature not only as living beings, but also as thinking beings, that is, *res cogitans* and *res extensa* at the same time. *The Black Cloud* tells the story of the encounter between the human race and a cloud upsetting the Solar System. A thinking

[65] Sir Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) was a British cosmologist and the main detractor of Lemaître's hypothesis. It was in order to ridicule the scenario proposed by the theory that he coined the expression, meant derisorily, of a "Big Bang". Yet, the expression captivated the attention of the general public of the 1950s, and has since become the most common designation for Lemaître's theory. Hoyle wrote many books, including works of fiction, among the latter is *The Black Cloud* (London: Harper, 1957).

cloud, to an extent a clock-cloud, capable of thought and action (cf. Karl Popper's essay 'Of Clouds and Clocks', 1972). In *Solaris*, the mystical sea, some sort of anamnesis and mirror of the world, puts us in our place, minuscule particles, infinitesimal parts of the cosmos, but speculative matter nonetheless. A part that reflects the whole.

I would like to avail myself of these two Spinozist fictions to engage the description of the filmic organism: a mirror granted memory, made up of parts that reflect one another and that in this way contain each other.

On more than one occasion in the islands of southern Chile I have heard sailors, who frequent the turbulent waters of the misleadingly named Pacific Ocean, say that from the depths of sea—especially on certain days of immaculate skies and peaceful waters—there emerge faces with malevolent stares; which, as if in a vertiginous dissolve, look at the sailors while pulling menacing faces and diabolical grimaces, saying to them: "Be careful, be very careful". Do these faces look at whoever looks at them? Or at someone who projects their intimate and metaphorical image of the sea (an image that is formed since childhood)?

Reasoned pareidolia or imaginal reason? Yuan Hong Dao and Lie Zi come to my aid. The former explains—and here he agrees with Don Palomino—that nature, not only imitates art, but also human beings when they are willing to make a minimal gesture of friendship; there can then be a dialogue with the world. It is enough to know how to coordinate the images seen in movement with the movement of serene emotions, passing imperceptibly as they do from almost-love to almost-hate, from timid fear to vague rejoicing. I have read several treatises on physiognomy that extend themselves in vast classifications of the many gestures of the human face. From Pierre Camper (Amsterdam, 1792) to Charles Le Brun (*The Expression of Passions*), from Ibn Arabi to Ibn Hazan. All of them—some more so than others—consider the face's many expressions by comparing them with expression in animals ("blue eyes, frank look, blonde hair: betrayal, like in apes or in women", writes Ibn Arabi). I only know of *Treatise of Natural Physiognomy* by Pedro Soto (Pedro Sotus), which advances an interpretation of human emotions in relation to nature: snow-mountain face, desert face, sandy beach face. And then, of course, there is the human physiognomy of a starry night (recall that the archaic Hamlet recognised his father's face, Orveld, as a constellation).

There would be human faces in all things. A curious theory. Why human faces and not the faces of horses, or ants, or fish or seaweed? A false theory, undoubtedly, as many others. Once more, we should bear in mind that in their letters Ulam and Von Neuman defend what they call the pseudo-sciences: psychoanalysis, linguistics, astrology, anthropology, poetics (Radin and Taylor), Kabbalah and geomancy. Each intellectual discipline has its own rules and restrictions, and on the basis of these one can metaphorically build paths leading to the apprehension of phenomena that try to escape us, cinema, for instance.

However, let us try to go further, towards the eyes of the world's things. Two or three intuitions may serve us to approach landscapes and 'looking-things': in *Sens Plastique* (Los Angeles: *Green Integer*, 2005), Malcolm de Chazal tells us that walking through a train station in the city of Saint Louis on the Island of Mauritius, he suddenly felt as if he were being looked at maliciously; wanting to know who was looking at him, he found out—through interposed paranoia—that the evil observer was a steam engine. Michael Lonsdale has quoted a text by Claudel—which I do not know—in which the fumes of a cremated saint board a train (he doesn't specify which seating class), and set off on a journey crossing Siberia. False theories or suitably refuted theories, or theories reframed by new paradigms. In the history of culture, examples abound.

Stanislavski hears Ribot speak, and reading his books—at least two: *Diseases of Memory* and *Diseases of Will*—finds the theoretical basis that his method lacks. Of greater relevance to our case: Bondi and Gold metaphorically configure a hypothesis of the universe, their enlightening starting point being a looped ghost film, *Dead of Night* (1945) by Alberto Cavalcanti. Later with Fred Hoyle's help, they invent—before being parsimoniously refuted—a hypothesis they term the 'Principle of Stability'. The universe has no beginning, there is no *big bang* (which, as we must not forget is neither big nor is it a bang), but simply dies and is reborn continuously. At a certain moment, new particles appear out of nothing. I have read slightly different versions of this theory. Consider Michio Kaku, Paul Davies and Fred Hoyle himself, the latter defending it until death came knocking on his door. And the version I heard from one of the patrons of *Café Il Bosco* in Santiago de Chile, Pedro Cordero, a physicist who one night in the winter of 1958 assured me that all that was needed for us to disprove the theory of the Big Bang—which in those days we knew as Lemaître's hypothesis—was for a single new particle to appear in the cosmos.[66] Another hypothesis—and it is Louis Farigoule I have in mind—taken very seriously by the members of *Grand Jeu*[67], affirmed that it was possible to see through one's skin. This extra-retinal vision may offer the possibility of having a rather novel perception of cinema, though on the condition that we watch films naked; which is indeed feasible.

But returning to Boldi and Gold's hypothesis. There is nothing that prevents us from using the model it suggests to examine the evolution of the world's cultural events: how they evolve, grow and disappear, without resorting to some notion of the 'progress of the arts', so common and employed so abusively throughout the previous century. If we visualise the evolution of the arts using, yet again, the metaphor of the river, we can imagine a model in which the

[66] A cosmological theory on the origin of the universe, presented in 1927 by the Belgian astronomer Georges Lemaître, and developed in 1948 by the Russian-American Georgy Gamov. It was christened the 'Big Bang' theory by Fred Hoyle (see the previous footnote).

[67] *Grand Jeu* was an influential literary review published in Paris (1928-1932).

many currents of the torrential river of the arts, carry along the cultural events—trunks, boats, floating islands (*camalotes*)—which are shipwrecks reemerging and journeying on to a sea with no before or after. Or, if we want to complicate the image, a circular river with no beginning or end and with countless shipwrecks.

Following the ideas of the Confucian philosopher Wang Fuzhi, François Jullien illustrates the difference between China and the West regarding their attitudes to cultural events, which he captures in the terms *Process or Creation*.[68] For Wang Fuzhi (and for many other Chinese philosophers), all cultural events are linked to—and are inseparable from—the world's creative flux: they are either varieties or wonders, as one prefers. For the Western artist creation is separable from the process, it creates its own reality, confronting, criticising and refuting the facts of the world and human beings. To use a distinction that is in vogue in physics, the Chinese philosopher is a uniformitarian, while the Western philosopher is a catastrophist. One privileges undiscernible facts, the other, cataclysms. And where is cinema in all this?

The films we normally watch use and abuse peripeteias, catastrophes, permanent destruction, bombings and battles, and sport.

In the preceding chapters, I looked at two complementary functions in the art of filmmaking: fascination and detachment. I would now like to ask the reader to combine these notions with those of catastrophism and uniformitarianism, process and creation. Indiscernible creation with no big bang has much to do with distance and catastrophism, and the work created *ex nihilo*.

A little jump will take us directly to a text that Professor Enzo Vivaldi, a Chilean neurologist, has sent me. The author is Allan Hobson (whom I have already mentioned) and the text is the reproduction of a conference paper delivered at Harvard in 1995. Hobson carefully examines the relation between dreaming and seeing a film. Besides the somewhat arrogant rhetoric—something common among scientists and to which over the years I have had to resign myself—the healthy anti-Freudian tone won my sympathy. In a few lines, he informs us that when dreaming and seeing films we become psychopaths. When seeing films? He doesn't quite put it like that. In any case, not just any film. In the paper, Hobson refers to Fellini's work (the paper is entitled: *The Art and Science of Fellini's Dream Vision*) placing emphasis on a particular aspect of his films. For instance, Fellini's *8* (1963), exemplifies the symptoms that transform a sleeping person into a psychopath: if we add to visual hallucination (the things we see in dreams), the disorientation, the strangeness of what is dreamt ('dream bizarreness'), the partial loss of memory ('dream amnesia'), fabulation ('dream narrative') and the emotional intensification ('dream anxiety', 'elation' and 'anger'), we have the classic case of psychotic delirium. Now, I know of various opinions that despite slight variations, tend to

[68] François Jullien, *Procès ou Création: Une introduction à la pensée chinoise* (Paris: Seuil, 1989).

affirm that the projection of a film in a dark room, and at no more than 24 frames per second, partially reproduces the delirious state of dreaming. The opinions vary and diverge according to the type of theory that each neurologist subscribes to: the holistic (Pribram) will most likely affirm that filmed life 'is a dream'; the defender of the modular brain (Restak) will be more reticent, and Vygotski would probably deny it. We will probably have an answer in a few years, when research on the behaviour of the brain during the projection of films is better established. Though I don't need to wait for these results to advance a few thoughts based on my personal experience and that of acquaintances. One of these friends recently saw a film that had left an impression on him when he was eight years old, and he tells me that the film *recognised him* as an old relative. The film *recognised him*, they looked at one another and greeted each other. Without a doubt, a metaphor. I asked the person telling me the story whether it had been the actors that had recognised him. His reply was that it hadn't been the actors, but somebody in the film. Someone circulating from actor to actor. Or lost in the gardens, or in the mountains.

I asked him, if by any chance that person was the film itself. He laughed and changed the subject, he was Chinese. Another, a Scotsman by birth and custom, opened his eyes, laughed and said that yes, that it was likely, as he had always known that all first films, that is, all the films we see as a child or *as children* are, by definition, fairy films. Fairy [*hada*] films? Fairy or fatum?[69] A theatre director who had made a film and who could not overcome his surprise at how different cinema could be from theatre said to me: "The worst is the ineluctable aspect of film". In each sequence, the images cannot change; there can be no modification or accident. I replied that in my experience, I had come across films that after having seen a dozen times would start changing, and that by the third or fourth viewing I had had the impression that the film was looking at me. Like the sea looking at the old man, like the steam engine looking at Malcolm de Chazal. That I knew people who after many viewings had reached the point where they would start failing to recognise the film, or perhaps, it was the film that had ceased to recognise them and was now leaving. Friendly films, vicious films. Friends and foes.

Here is my own theoretical fiction: in the waking dream that is our receiving the film, there is a counterpart; we start projecting another film on the film. I have said to project and that seems apt. Images that leave me and are superimposed on the film itself, such that the double film—as in the double vision of Breton traditions—becomes protean, filled with palpitations, as if breathing.

Of course, not all films have the power to carry us off in this joyous trance. And I do not know if the industrialists who make films, will be pleased to produce these sorts of works.

[69] An untranslatable wordplay on the Spanish *hada* (fairy), *hado* (destiny), and the Latin *fatum* (destiny), itself the root of the preceding words.

Extreme states between fear and trembling (Kierkegaard). Fascination, attraction. That will have to be balanced by detachment.

Involvement and detachment.

"The film, like the dream, signifies what it says and says what it signifies," affirms Hobson.

The film shows when it says and says when it shows (I say that).

Isn't film then a language?

Yes, it may be a language, but composed solely of verbs.

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"Eleven years separate these lines from the first part of my *Poetics of Cinema*. Meanwhile the world has changed and cinema with it. *Poetics of Cinema1* had much of a call to arms about it. What I write today is rather more of a *consolatio philosophica*. However, let no one be mistaken about this, a healthy pessimism may be better than a suicidal optimism. "Light, more light", were Goethe's dying words. "Less light, less light", cried Orson Welles repeatedly on a set –the one and only time I saw him. In today's cinema (and in today's world) there is too much light. It is time to return to the shadows. So, about turn! And back to the caverns!"

Following his research in *Poetics of Cinema1* on new narrative models as tools for apprehending a rapidly shifting world, Raul Ruiz with *Poetics of Cinema2* makes an appeal for an entirely new way of filming, writing, and of conceiving the image.

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